Programs Branch User Report

Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada

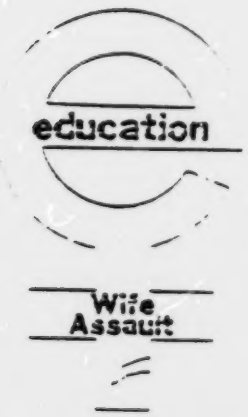
Secretariat

A Program to Train Lay Counsellors to Counsel and Support Battered Women

No. 1985-44

The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and are not necessarily those of the Ministry of the Solicitor General of Canada. This report may not be published, cited or reproduced without permission of the Ministry.

A Program to Train Lay Counsellors To Counsel and Support Battered Women



Dedicated to those feminists who identified the problem of wife assault as an issue, cared about the victims; pioneered services and counselling and worked to make this issue a public concern.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Education Wife Assault acknowledges the financial support for this project from Solicitor General Canada.

We would also like to thank the magazine Canadian Dimension for permission to reprint Helen Levine's article "Feminist Counselling."

The article "A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence" is reprinted with permission from Family Violence: A Workshop Manual for Rural Communities, by Rev. Marie Fortune and Denise Hormann, M.S.W., Center for Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence, Seattle Washington, 1980.

The sections on Communication and Interviewing are reprinted with permission from Introduction To Family Advocacy by Linda Washington and Lucy N. Friedman, Victim Services Agency, 2 Lafayette Street, New York, N.Y. 10007, September 1981.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART 1

Introduction and Rationale

Background to the Project.....1

Needs Assessment.....4

PART 2

Setting Up The Program

Project Outline and Components.....7

PART 3

Course Materials

Section 1 Background and Introduction.....29

Introduction of Trainees to the Program.....30

Women's Roles and Images.....38

Women's Legal and Social Position.....43

Marriage and the Family.....47

The Needs of Battered Women.....53

The Criminal Justice System.....55

The Medical, Welfare, and Social Service Systems.....56

Summary of Services and Gaps.....57

Section 2 Skills and Techniques.....58

Women's Lives.....59

Conceptual Framework for Counselling.....81

Depression.....89

Love, Friendship and Sexuality.....99

Women and Addiction.....106

Women and Mental Illness.....107

Profile of a Battered Woman.....110

Religious Issues and Counselling Battered Women.....131

The Role and Work of the Paraprofessional.....132

PART 1

INTRODUCTION AND RATIONALE

Lay Counselling Project

I. BACKGROUND TO THE PROJECT

Rationale

While concern for the problem of wife assault is growing, effective services for battered women are severely limited. With effective counselling and support, victims of wife assault can be helped to resolve their situation and live without violence.

However, in this time of economic restraint, the resources for such services to battered women will be limited. Innovative and imaginative ways of delivering new support services in a variety of settings and regions are therefore necessary.

One possibility for supporting and counselling battered women is the establishment of programs which employ lay counsellors to provide this service. Below is a proposal for developing a training program for lay counsellors. This program includes a service component.

Our intention in developing this program is to offer one flexible model for service to battered wives. This training

course is one way of involving more women in that work. It does not preclude activity in other areas, such as shelters for women; it supplements it. It is intended as an additional way of working with battered women, in areas where the services are inadequate or nonexistent. It is also intended as a way of involving more women who do not have professional credentials and interests but who do have a commitment to working with women. Because the program has several stages and components, it is flexible enough to be used in any community, and can be expanded as the personnel and resources become available.

Purpose

The purpose of the program is to train women to provide effective counselling and support to battered women, so that battered women will be able to make decisions about and take control of their lives.

Goals

When we began this project our goal was to develop a project and find funding for implementation. As work progressed, it became clear that the amount of funding required could only be secured over a long period -- exceeding the limits of this project. Because of this, we made a decision to develop the program aspect more fully. We saw

several advantages to this approach:

1. Funders would be presented with a concrete program for consideration.
2. Other groups interested in such a program could use the core material, adapt it to their own situation, and apply for funding in their own regions.
3. Adaptation and revision of the program by others would not have to await a demonstration project.
4. Our needs assessment indicated an interest in program materials.
5. Future efforts could concentrate on funding rather than on development.

For all these reasons, we have produced the core materials as the basis of a lay counselling project.

II. NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The dearth of services for battered women and the cutbacks in social services pointed to the need for lay counselling and training of lay counsellors. We see the involvement of lay counsellors as one strategy for providing the necessary services and meeting an increasing need for flexible, community-based, and more widely distributed services.

Some of the most successful programs for battered women were initiated outside the professional social services by community groups and women's groups. And some of the most effective counsellors in these programs are lay counsellors.

We felt there was a definite need for a lay training program, and our informal discussions with those in the field confirmed this. In order to document this need we conducted a formal needs assessment. Below is an outline of this process.

1. SURVEY AND QUESTIONNAIRE

1. We devised a questionnaire (Appendix 1) for those working in the field of wife assault which requested information on:

a) the need for counselling for battered women

b) the role lay counsellors could play

c) the usefulness of lay counsellors to their particular program

d) information on training programs in this area.

2. We had this questionnaire translated into French (Appendix 2).

3. We sent the questionnaire to every shelter and transition house for battered women in Canada. The questionnaire was also sent to other programs for battered women.

4. We devised a detailed questionnaire (Appendix 3) to be used as an interview tool in personal interviews with a selection of workers in the field (Appendix 4). Although the budget limited the distribution of these interviews, we feel that we were successful in contacting a number of important programs.

2. RESPONSES

1. We were extremely pleased at the number of completed questionnaires returned (Appendix 5) and the enthusiastic and positive response to the idea of lay counselling training.

2. The results of the survey were reinforced by the results of the interviews. These interviews confirmed the need for more services for battered women: respondents felt

that lay counsellors could play an important role in helping battered women and that a lay counselling training program would be useful.

3. The general survey and the detailed interviews indicated key factors for an effective training program and apprcach. These were incorporated into the design. The factors identified were:

a) attention to the safety of the battered woman

b) acceptance and belief of the battered woman's story

c) the battered woman is not responsible for her beating

d) the goal in working with battered women is to help them assume responsibility for their own lives.

We hope that interested groups will use the core materials as a starting point and create their own programs.

Those groups using the core materials will presumably share the approach and philosophy of the program:

the goal in working with battered women is to ensure their safety and provide them with an opportunity to take control of their own lives.

PART 2

SETTING UP THE PROGRAM

III. THE PROJECT OUTLINE

1. DESIGN

Our intention was to design a program which was comprehensive enough to include the essential elements needed to train lay counsellors to work with battered women, and clear enough in its philosophy to indicate a very specific direction or orientation. That philosophy is feminist and woman-centred. In addition, we wanted a design flexible enough to be used in a variety of settings and locations throughout the country and adaptable enough to meet particular needs. The points at which the program is adaptable are:

a) the community setting

b) the timetable and delivery of the program

c) the community support systems and coalitions

d) funding

e) public education supports

f) budget

2. APPROACH: WOMEN IN SOCIETY AS A KEY TO EFFECTIVE APPROACH

When specific problems have been identified many helping professionals are trained to isolate and focus on the problem exclusively, ignoring especially the social milieu and societal context of the individual. Their practice therefore concentrates on individual pathology and this is reflected in intervention and treatment. The difficulty with this approach is that it denies the reality of the way in which people function, the social interaction, the role of the society to socialize and define individuals and mediate their relationships. It denies that individual impulses, feelings, and needs are structured into expression by social norms taught and enforced in the society. What is cultural conditioning is viewed as innate, and analysis of the problem is incomplete or short-circuited. Because problems are seen to be individual and isolated, most work must be remedial, and prevention is a puzzle.

The problem of wife assault is a case in point. Until feminists began to insist that wife beating was a problem of such magnitude that it couldn't be attributed to the pathology of a few unfortunate individuals (usually the victims), intervention usually focused on preserving the marriage. The extent of the problem forces us to look further than individuals and consider whether its social aspect and

the context in which it happens is not also important.

It is necessary to deal with individuals in terms of their behaviour and relationships and it is also important to ask why these disturbances are manifested through wife beating and why the problem continues in this society.

When intervening and treating victims, the social context of the woman must be acknowledged. If the woman's life situation is not understood, the helper cannot deal with the key considerations in the individual situation realistically. Safety, vulnerability, economic dependence, physical strength, and children are concrete factors the woman must deal with; if helpers cannot understand this, they cannot provide help. If helpers offer help in a vacuum, their effectiveness is very limited. This understanding of the social context is crucial because every step in the situation of an assaulted wife requires her to act in a way that challenges traditional socialization, self-image, social role, and cultural image and requires her to be strong, self-directed, tenacious, and persistent. Counsellors and helpers who demand this of battered women should be aware of the enormity of these requirements and both the personal and social consequences for the individual.

Counselling and support of battered women has to take account of the realities of their daily lives: the role of women in society and the implications of that role in

individual lives; the fact that women do not enjoy equal rights, economic and social opportunity, and mobility; and the role that institutions play in maintaining the status quo and therefore inequality in relationships. The counselling and support this program offers is directed at the individual and personal needs of the victims, and also recognizes the social context in which we all exist.

Trainees will learn how to counsel a battered woman and will understand that most communities do not provide the protection, housing, and financial support women need in order to leave the situation. If they understand these things, they will not be so surprised or angry when a woman does not leave, or does not leave permanently. And they will be able to work with women in a way that is effective, helpful, and respectful.

3. COMPONENTS AND SCHEDULE OF THE PROJECT

The project was designed so there can be flexibiilty in its implementation. It can be done over the period of one year, with students attending classes in the day, for the whole day, part of a day, in the evenings or on weekends. The scheduling will depend entirely on the resources and the community. The only limitation is the provision of some sort of coverage for

emergencies that clients in the program may encounter. The needs of the clients are not flexible, and any program must take these needs seriously.

Below is one possible time frame for the project. This schedule can be used as a base on which a number of variations can be made.

The basic components in the project are:

1. Setting up the program in the community. During this period, the advisory board which will run the project will be crated; community publicity for the project will occur; and the necessary community contacts will be initiated. Additional funding could be investigated at this time, and administrative decisions made. Trainee selections will be made and a source for cient referrals established.

2. The Training Program Introduction. The introduction is done in a 2-month period, with students attending classes for a minimum of 5 hours per day for 5 days, or 25 hours per week. This could also be extended to 7 hours for a fuller program.

3. Counselling Training. The counselling training, which includes teaching theory, techniques, and practice with clients, is done over a period of 8 months, with students attending sessions for a minimum of 6 hours per day for 5 days

a week, or 30 hours per week. This can be expanded to 8 hours a day if there is the time.

4. As part of the training in counselling, the trainees will have supervised direct contact with the battered women who are the clients. This contact presupposes an existing service. The trainees are introduced to and used in that service at various points. It is also possible to create a counselling service at the same time as setting up the training. This will require a high degree of coordination and care. Client needs will have to take priority. Contact between clients and trainees will take a variety of forms:

- helping clients complete paper work and applications;
- accompanying clients on interviews; attending support group sessions;
- assisting in the running of support groups. These contacts will be supervised by the trainers.

5. Community Development. This part of the program is done after the Introduction and is incorporated as part of the Counselling Training. This component requires approximately 160 additional hours. Depending on the community, the community development project chosen by the group, and the needs of the clients, these hours will be added to those of the counselling training at the appropriate place.

6. Evaluation. Ongoing evaluation should be a part of the project from the very beginning. Criteria should be established by the advisory committee for this type of evaluation, and some sort of final evaluation and assessment must also be done. This is particularly important if the program is going to be extended in the community, and for the use of other groups who may use the proposal and benefit from the experience of those who have implemented it previously. The project must also be evaluated in terms of its contribution to resolving the problem of wife assault in our communities. The quality and effectiveness of the training and the usefulness of the approach to battered women are two primary considerations.

4. SETTING UP A PROGRAM IN THE COMMUNITY

Some Practical Considerations

Presuming there is funding assured, or in place, the setup will require 3 to 6 months of work.

Goals

1. To provide a counselling and support service to women in a community where these services do not yet exist or are inadequate.

2. To train women in a community to meet the immediate needs of battered women.
3. To lay the groundwork for establishing and extending services to battered women, which are community-defined and community-based.

Structure

1. Establish a group to administer and run this program. This can be an existing group, a coalition of groups, or a group which is newly formed for this purpose. This structure should fit the goals and philosophy of the program.
2. Include in the group those who are in sympathy with the goals and who will be able to give a commitment to the project.
3. Clarify how decisions are to be made, and who will make them. Investigate various forms of decision-making including the collective and cooperative methods.

Material Needs

- space for counselling battered women
- space for teaching
- administrative office
- 24-hour crisis response
- office supplies
- teaching supplies
- space for meetings

Personnel Needs

- trainers
- administrator/administrative secretary
- decision-making group
- trainees
- clients
- community advisors/supporters

Trainee Selection

Establish
- criteria for (profile of) trainees
- recruitment method
- selection method
- trainee support; stipends; transportation; childcare

Community Inventory

- Resources for battered women in the community
- professional resources
- teaching resources: further specialized training available
- support/backup services
- community sympathy/understanding/support
- information referral resources

Building Community Support and Acceptance

This task will begin before the project actually starts and will continue as an ongoing function throughout. Contact and inform as many people in as many ways as possible about the problem and about the project's work. Do not neglect any segment in the community.

5. SAMPLE BUDGET

While the components are a guideline for the budget, the figures outlined below are an approximation only. Many of the items can be funded in other ways besides direct grants. Donations of space or the use of existing space, for instance, can reduce the actual cash needed for the project.

This budget assumes optimal funding conditions. There are several components to the project, and it might be possible to use different funding sources for different parts of the program. Some items may be donated in kind, and thus the budget would be reduced or the cash contribution distributed in other ways than those outlined here.

Setup

This project can be established by a volunteer group, paid staff, or a combination. The figures below are based on a paid staff person doing the setting up.

salary, 3 months @ $450/wk	$ 5,400
clerical support @ $350/wk	4,200
office supplies, phone, typewriter rental, paper, photocopy, postage	1,000
office rent	500

Program

1. 2 Trainers/consultants, $450/wk, 9 months. This time can be distributed in a number of ways, including teaching, supervision, community development, backup support for clients. It can also be distributed among 2 full-time people or 4 half-time people; any combination that makes sense for the program. $450 x 2 x 39	35,100
2. Project administrator/secretary $450 x 52 weeks	23,400
3. clerical support $350 x 39 weeks	18,200
4. Trainees' stipend $200 x 10 x 40 weeks	80,000
daycare & transportation for trainees $45 x 10 x 40 weeks	18,000
daycare & transportation for clients	10,000
classroom & meeting space; counselling & office space	12,000
teaching aids, supplies, materials	1,500
office supplies, paper, photocopying	2,500
translators (depending on clientele)	10,000
TOTAL	$221,900

6. TRAINEES

Numbers

The suggested number of trainees in a first program is ten. The clients can number up to 100, since their needs and situations will vary. Some clients may require service which includes childcare, transportation, assistance with medical, legal, housing and welfare arrangements, and also intensive counselling. Other clients may require a very short period of consulting and minimal assistance. Trainees need to learn how to deal with both extremes, and with every situation in between.

Trainee Selection

There are a number of considerations in selecting trainees for the program. We suggest an application procedure, consisting of a short introduction to the program including some background on the problem of wife abuse, the goals and methodology of the program, and the role of the program in the overall service picture. A question-and-answer period could conclude the presentation. Ideally, this presentation could be done for a group of interested potential applicants. After this, those interested in applying as trainees could set up individual appointments for a personal interview. Two people should interview the prospective trainee and can use the

accompanying questionnaire as a guideline.

We believe that the program can benefit from including formerly battered women as trainees and counsellors. In response to the concern that formerly battered women will not have the distance and objectivity to make good counsellors, we believe that the selection process and the requirement that all trainees have maturity, empathy, interest and an openness to learning addresses that concern. We believe that the interview process and the demands made on trainees who were formerly battered should be the same as those for those who have never been battered.

Questionnaire guide for in-depth interview

"The kind of woman we're looking for in a trainee is someone who is enthusiastic, patient, and understanding. We're looking for maturity, someone who is caring, and at the same time, someone who can set limits for herself. It is also important that the trainee be open to new ideas, to examining her own ideas and actions critically, and willing to change. We want trainees who have a sympathy for women and also an understanding that women's lives are shaped by many forces besides individual action. It wouldn't hurt if the trainee also had a sense of humour. How do you fit this description?"

More structured questions:

1. Age
2. Work experience (i) in the home
   (ii) outside the home -- taking care of children, relatives, etc.
3. Why do you want to become a counsellor?
4. What experience have you had that will help you to become a counsellor?
5. What qualities do you have that make you suitable for counselling -- experiences in the home, the workforce, the community.
6. What kinds of associations do you have; do you belong to a service group, church group, women's group, club, union, PTA? Do you have some close friends? Do you have a variety of acquaintances? Are there people who would vouch for you -- friends, neighbours, former employers?
7. Are you a strong person?
8. What do you hope to get out of this training for yourself?
9. Are you persistent, persevering?
10. What kinds of thing makes you angry?
11. How do you handle frustration?
12. How do you feel about women working outside the home?
13. What, in your opinion, makes a marriage work?
14. What do you know about wife battering?
15. What, in your opinion, are the important factors in good family life?

16. What, in your opinion, are the important factors in relationships?

Recruitment of Trainees

Recruitment is a self-selection process as well as a selection process. Prospective trainees will be local women who have the interest and time to enter the program. Therefore, you will want to publicize the program to as many women and in as many ways as you can. Public education presentations are an important way to begin.

7. COUNSELLORS AND TRAINERS

Trained counsellors are needed to:

- provide counselling and continuity of service to battered women who are clients of the program
- provide some supervision of the trainees -- especially their work with battered women
- provide some of the instruction to trainees.

Depending on the size of the program, the structure of the project, and the services for battered women in the community, these counsellors could be full-time personnel, part-time personnel, or employed in another service and loaned

temporarily to the project.

The trainers could be trained counsellors or a group who had expertise in the fields of counselling, adult education, social work, and community organizing.

Ideally a project would be able to find counsellors/ trainers who had experience working with battered women and were able to communicate that experience to the trainees as well as supervise the trainees in their work. In order to follow the program outline the counsellor would have to be a feminist or at the least share the feminist perspective on the issue of wife assault. It is essential that the question of philosophy or perspective be understood and agreed on at the outset.

The relationship between the counsellors, trainers, and/or counsellor/trainers and the other personnel in the project will need to be clearly defined at the outset. Accountability will have to be worked out. This may be complicated in cases where the project is sponsored by an existing service. If the project is autonomous, the accountability and responsibility must be clear, particularly because of the needs of the clients.

Not all the trainers need to be counsellors. Adult educators, community workers, or teachers who have some experience in the field, have worked with adults, and have some understanding of the problem, can be effective in

teaching the parts of the course about women's position, community resources, and advocacy.

8. THE SETTING

It is possible to use this program in a variety of settings or to use a number of sites for the program. Space is required for counselling, teaching, and discussion groups. This space could be found in community centres, churches, community colleges, social service agencies -- even hospitals. If the project is associated with an existing service such as a social service agency, a community college, or a women's centre, these groups may have access to the needed facilities.

9. ESSENTIAL SERVICES: CHILDCARE, TRANSPORTATION, AND ADVOCACY

A counselling service is necessary for battered women in their efforts to re-establish themselves, but unless additional services are also available the counselling will be of very limited value. Unless there are means for battered women to get around to the courts, lawyers, doctors, welfare offices, potential housing and job interviews, and unless there are

people who can offer support and encouragement and explain procedures to her; these tasks will become additional obstacles rather than steps towards her independence.

Therefore, transportation, childcare, and advocacy services are essential services to the program. The way in which they are organized will vary with the location, circumstances, and resources of the program, but they must be available in some form.

Childcare

The space and personnel for a childcare service will not be available in most cases, and other options will have to be created. Care for short periods might be organized on a cooperative basis, using either the program space or spare room in a school, church, community centre or local nursery. Cooperative care in a private home might be another alternative. Obviously this care will be limited to a set number of hours or days, but it should accommodate the most pressing needs. Perhaps some arrangement can be made with a local nursery or daycare program, or with a homecare program. Perhaps a local women's service group will take on this responsibility as its way of supporting the project. Often, women want to help but don't have the time for training or prolonged commitment. Childcare is one area in which this short-term type of support can be used.

Transportation

Especially in rural areas, transportation is a crucial support service. Women cannot be expected to turn their lives around when all their energy is consumed in finding childcare and transportation. Again, this kind of service can be provided by volunteers who have limited time or commitment: a service club, church group or union group might undertake this directly, or might provide funds for taxis and busfares. In communities where concern for the problem of abuse has been voiced, perhaps the politicians would be convinced to subsidize transportation, or provide the service. Again, all the possibilities should be explored, particularly the circumstances of the local situation.

Advocacy

Advocacy is an integral part of the training program. Women who are making major changes in their lives require clear information on the procedures they have to follow and what to expect at each stage of the process. Ideally, they will have someone to accompany them in their meetings with the police, lawyers, welfare officials, and anyone else they have to encounter. This advocate can be a lay counsellor, or a professional. Whoever it is, her role is to support and encourage the woman in her efforts to make her own decisions and her own changes.

10. PUBLIC EDUCATION

Public education is a necessary component of any program. These programs should add to or begin the education process on the subject of wife assault in your community. They will also bring out supporters, some of whom may be prospective trainees and some of whom may be prospective volunteers for other aspects of the program. These education presentations will also reach battered women in the community, and let them know there are those who are concerned for their situation.

Stories in the local newspaper and on radio and TV stations are also useful, but should be seen as a supplement to personal contacts. It is very important to contact local women's organizations and speak at their meetings and gatherings. Try to gain support from individual local women, as well as from groups of women in the local churches, social clubs, unions, service clubs, and farm clubs. When speaking at meetings, describe the need for the program in your community, how the program will operate, and what kind of support you are looking for. Be as specific as you can, and give as much local information as you can. One of your key contacts is the nearest women's group working on the problem of wife assault, or some aspect of violence against women.

This group, or groups, should be the first to be informed of your work. At the very least, they should be notified of your plans; ideally, you could coordinate your work and avoid duplication and needless effort.

If you are the only group in your geographic area, link with the group that is closest, either geographically or philosophically. We need each other. You can obtain names of groups through the Ontario Association of Interval and Transition Houses, or through the local office of the Women's Program, Secretary of State.

Not everyone will be willing to support your program, but the more people you contact the more interest and support you will generate.

Because the program requires community support at many levels, it is useful to keep your needs for a range of volunteers in mind when you are promoting your work. In addition to trainees, you will need fundraisers, speakers, people to help with administration, and transportation.

One of the easiest ways to present a public education program is to show a film and have discussion groups afterwards. It is useful to have literature to distribute and if there is none available locally you can order material from Education Wife Assault. The films we find most useful are "Violence Behind Closed Doors," an American film available from some local libraries free of charge, and "Loved,

Honoured, Bruised," a Canadian film made by the National Film Board of Canada and available free of charge from the nearest National Film Board outlet.

At any public meeting, always provide a way for taking names and addresses of interested people. Keep those lists and use these people to build a support base in the community.

Finally, remember that local politicians will be useful allies if you can gain their support. Don't assume that they have a clear understanding of the problem; be prepared to educate them as you enlist their support. Similarly, those whose work involves them in the problem of wife assault -- police, doctors, clergy, lawyers, social workers -- should be informed of the program and asked to support it.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

There are many useful bibliographies available on the subject of wife assault. Most of them are divided into sections dealing with specific aspects of the problem. We recommend that groups refer to a selection of bibliographies, including our own recently published Catalogue of Materials on Wife Assault Available in Ontario.

PART 3

COURSE MATERIALS

Section I

Designed and written by:

Barbara Waisberg

section 1

background and introduction

MONTH 1 WEEK 1: INTRODUCTIONS

Goals

1. To introduce students and trainers to each other.
2. To introduce some key ideas in the program.
3. To describe and explain the approach of the program and why that approach is being used.

Rationale

The program is based on a number of premises, outlined below, and a belief that the most effective way to learn is to involve the learner as fully as possible in her own learning. Some of these premises, and this approach to learning, may be new to many students. The first week is spent in informal discussion of the ideas in the program and in getting to know each other.

Main Points

Participants will come with a number of ideas about the problem of wife battering, the role of women, and the ways in which battered women can be helped. These ideas will be explored in the course of the first week.

The program is based on the following premises:

1. Battered women are not to blame for their battering.
2. The batterer who beats the woman is directly responsible for the beating.

3. The society which does not provide protection and relief from the battering has indirect responsibility.

4. The solution to the problem lies in a combination of individual and social action and in the enforcement of the appropriate laws.

5. The objective in working with battered women is to empower them to make their own decisions and to take direction of their lives.

6. It is due to the work of the women's movement that this problem has been recognized and special services provided.

Format

The week is a combination of learning about each other and learning about the ideas in the program. Experiential exercises and short presentation by the trainers, followed by group discussions, are the methods used in this first week. Trainers can select from the exercises outlined below, or can use others that will achieve the same purpose of relaxing the group, getting to know one another, and setting an informal tone for the rest of the course.

Begin with a welcome to the group.

Exercise 1: Introduction

Sitting in a circle, ask each member of the group, including the trainers, to go around the groups introducing herself by saying her name and one thing she would like the group to know about her. The trainer should be the first to start this

exercise.

Following this exercise, the trainers will make a short presentation about the purpose of the program and some of the key ideas underlying it (see previous page). At this point, let the group know that they will soon have a chance to discuss these ideas and their questions and comments. Before that happens, the trainers may want to do one more exercise to introduce and relax the participants.

Exercise 2: Hopes and Fears

Because this is a new situation, trainees may have some nervousness and excitement about what is going to happen and what they will be doing. To help the group deal with these feelings, you can do an exercise that brings out the feelings in the group and lets individuals see that others share their reactions. Ask participants to take a few minutes to think to themselves about their feelings about coming today. "What would be the best possible thing that could happen? What would be the worst possible thing that could happen?"

These questions can relate to anything from the learning situation to physical comfort or emotional experience. Give a few examples: "The worst thing that could happen today is that I say something silly," or "The worst thing that could happen is that I discover I'm wearing two different-coloured socks." "The best thing that could happen today is that I'll make a

new friend; or I'll learn something new." These comments might be about any topic.

Then divide the group into two sections and give each section 2 sheets of newsprint on which they, as a group, are to list hopes (the best things that could happen) and fears (the worst things). Appoint or have each group select a person to record the answers. Give the groups 5-10 minutes to make their lists, during which time the trainers make their own lists; then read through the lists, commenting on the expectations and the similarities in the feelings.

This exercise should relax people and also give the trainers clues to how people are feeling.

Ideas in the Program

Because this is still a relatively new situation to the trainees, it may be easiest to begin the discussion of the ideas presented earlier by looking at a set of questions addressing the topics. The trainer can prepare these questions on a sheet of newsprint beforehand. Questions can cover the topics of learning; working with battered women; the difference between rescuing and empowering; the feminist movement and its work on the issue.

Examples of questions:

A. Learning

1. Think of your own school experiences. What did you like best about them?

2. What did you like least about them?

3. What methods of learning have you experienced as an adult? Lecturing, reading, discussing, working alone, working with others? What methods are you most comfortable with and why? What methods make you least comfortable?

4. Can you enjoy the work and learn at the same time?

B. Methods of Work

For most of our lives the way in which we work with each other is determined for us. The most common method, but by no means the only one, is a hierarchy in which a few people have the power to make decisions and to direct most of the other people. What other methods of work have you experienced? If you had your choice, what method would you like to use? Why?

Participants may not have experienced any other method than a hierarchy. The trainer should be prepared to describe other methods, particularly the cooperative and collective method which the women's movement has experimented with.

This discussion need not be a very long one. The purpose is to introduce the idea that there may be ways of working together other than those we know best.

C. Working with Battered Women

1. Why do you want to work with battered women?

2. What do you have to offer?

3. What do you want to get out of this work?

4. How will you feel if the woman you are working with does not do the things you think she should?

Emphasize that there are no right answers in this section. The questions are an opportunity to explore a range of motivations and ideas.

D. Rescuing and Empowering

As an introduction to this topic, the trainer will explain the difference between these two ideas and the approaches to working with battered women that follow from them.

1. Can you think of an experience you had when someone tried to help you by taking over from you and doing everything for you? You did not make your own decision and your own mistakes. How did this make you feel?

2. What, in your opinion, are the difficulties in rescuing someone?

3. There is a difference between "rescuing" a battered woman when working with her and ensuring that she is not in danger. This distinction is important because it involves the woman's safety. How can you determine danger?

4. Can you think of an experience when you were helped to make your own decision?

5. What advantages do you see in using this method, for yourself as a worker and for the client?

6. What difficulties could you see for yourself in working to empower women? What difficulties could you see for the woman you are working with?

E. The Women's Movement

The women's movement is made up of many groups and individuals with many ideas. Some people react with anger, fear or skepticism to the ideas and people they associate with feminism. Others react with excitement, relief, and enthusiasm. In this section you want to do two things:

1) give trainees a chance to examine the role the women's movement has played in bringing the subject of wife assault to the attention of the public, and the work it has done in creating new and special services for battered women; and
2) give trainees a chance to say what the women's movement means to them.

The work of the women's movement, in the area of wife assault. Students are asked to find out:

1. Who are the people who have been working in the area of wife assault?
2. When was the first shelter for battered women started, and who started it?
3. What kinds of things do feminists want to see done about the problem of wife assault?
4. What new theories were developed about wife battering and where did they come from?

These are questions the students can be given beforehand and can research on their own working together in small groups. The information they will find will form the basis of discussion for this section. (The trainers should have the information on hand for the students.)

Feelings about the women's movement. Go around the circle and have each participant say what she feels about the women's movement. This is not a test or a debate (and this should be made clear before discussion starts). It is a chance to express feelings. At the end of the course there will be another chance to look at the same question and to see whether opinions have changed.

By the end of this week of discussion and exercise the students should feel more relaxed about the process; have some understanding of the program; and know each other and the trainers. They should also have some concrete information about wife assault and a lot of unanswered questions.

WEEK 2: WOMEN'S ROLES & IMAGES

Purpose

1. To give the trainees some understanding of women's position in society as the context for understanding wife battering.

2. To give some understanding of how social forces influence and shape us as individuals, and how we are affected by the definitions of women that are popular in our society.

Rationale

An understanding of women's roles and images is particularly important for work in this area, because one of the factors that battered women have to deal with is their understanding of what a woman's roles and responsibilities are. They also have to deal with society's view of woman's role, particularly in response to a beating. This view is manifested in the way police, social workers, doctors, clergy, lawyers, etc. treat battered women. It is also communicated by the laws and services which apply to the battering situation.

The definitions and images of women are often opposite to the reality women experience. The expectations of women's roles that follow from the unrealistic definitions are therefore unreasonable and unworkable. It is important when working with this problem to be clear about what is reality, what is possible, and what kinds of changes have to be made.

Main Points

Begin by looking at what the image of woman is. What is the physical ideal? What are the non-physical characteristics, emotional and psychological? If we have such specific ideas, where do they come from? To answer this question, we look at several sources:

- our own experience as women
- the material surrounding us, such as the media, popular sayings and beliefs, etc.
- statistics, articles, research
- the institutions that affect us -- the family, school, law, the church, marriage, jobs.

How are we taught these ideas? We learn them through example:

- what and who we see around us; through the family
- what behaviours we see and are instructed in; through the school
- what behaviours are rewarded and approved, what behaviours are presented as acceptable and appropriate.

Consider the idea of sex role stereotyping -- that the kind of characteristics you have as a person is determined by whether you are male or female. Is this a valid idea?

Concrete data on women's position in society.

Women's economic position:

- earning power
- employment rate
- unemployment rate
- type of work

Women's relationship to others: children; men; other women.

Women's characteristics: a look at women's traditional strengths and weaknesses.

Format

Questions and Discussion. A great deal of the data can come from the group itself, since much of it is based in our own experience as women in this society, and participants can produce it through reflecting on their own lives.

This week is an opportunity for maximum input by the students. The trainers' role is to present the questions and guide the discussions, rather than present a lecture or give the answers.

What are the images?

Ask the women to bring in pictures from magazines, newspapers, etc. of what a woman is. The pictures will show the physical characteristics and the activities and behaviours which are

considered appropriate for women. List these on a flip chart. Take time to discuss each point. Put together a picture of an "ideal" woman.

1. Ask the group to think about women who are different, who don't fit. Discuss what they feel about them.
2. Ask each woman to privately compare herself to the ideal.
3. How does that make her feel?

Where do we get the images?

Begin by asking where we get our ideas of what being a woman means. Brainstorm, and write answers that the group calls out on a flipchart.

What are our own images?

Think about some of the ideas you have of women's role (e.g. women are gentle). Trace some of these ideas in your memories to their source in your own experience. Think particularly about charcteristics attributed to women. What about characteristics attributed to men -- look at the article "Psychology Constructs the Female" in the book Women in Sexist Society.

Concrete Data

Collect data from Statistics Canada and provincial sources (e.g. Ministry of Labour, Women's Bureau Ontario). Have students present statistics on women's economic position,

employment rate, kinds of jobs women work in, median imcome, unionization, unemployment rate, mother's allowance and the conditions under which it is issued (the material should be available to students). Discuss the implications of women's economic position specifically related to: opportunities for earning a living; opportunities for independence; planning for the future. Ask students to think about how this information relates to battered women. What is the connection between how we feel about ourselves, what our expectations of women are, and what the actual economic opportunities for women are?

Resources

Films on Images of Women

Ways of Seeing, Part 2, a BBC film by John Berger
Killing Us Softly
Anything You Want To Be
Antonia

Articles on Socialization

"Psychology Constructs the Female," by Naomi Weisstein in Women in Sexist Society

"Ambivalence: the Socialization of Women," by Judith Bardwick and Elizabeth Douvain, ibid.

"Being and Doing: A Cross-Cultural Examination of the Socialization of Males and Females," by Nancy Chodorow, ibid.

"Why Are There No Great Women Artists?", by Linda Nochlin, ibid.

WEEK 3: WOMEN'S LEGAL & SOCIAL POSITION

Goal

To give the participants a clearer understanding of what women's legal rights are, and what implications these have for women's social position.

Rationale

The whole issue of wife battering is profoundly affected by the question of women's legal rights, and the attitude that the law has towards the exercise of those rights. It is imperative that those working with battered women know the laws which affect battered women, and also understand the ways in which laws are enforced or not enforced.

Main Points

Legal

The group is to examine women's rights with regard to

(i) control over their person;
(ii) control over their property.

(i) Control over Person. Consider how this control is affected by the laws of marriage, divorce, abortion, birth control, and rape. What are the restrictions and what effect do they have? Who makes the decisions about marriage? divorce? abortion? birth control? rape? Consider how

immigration laws, the laws of sponsorship, affect battered immigrant women.

(ii) Control over Property. Look at the provincial laws affecting widow's entitlement, divorce settlement, custody of children, welfare. Look at the federal laws affecting CPP.

Women's Social Position

What has women's access been to the vote, public office, education, religious office?

When did women receive the vote?

How many women MPs and MPPs are there? How many women judges, Supreme Court judges, police, other positions of authority?

What role do women play in education? How many women attain higher education? How many women are there in positions of authority in education? Would an increase in the number of women in positions of authority make a difference to the majority of women? Why?

What roles do women play in organized religion?

Format

Short summaries of the laws regarding marriage, divorce, abortion, birth control and immigration should be made available for students to read. Because of the detail, it might be useful for the trainer to make a short presentation

in the form of a lecture, and then have the materials available for reference.

The emphasis should be on discussion, particularly the implications and effects of the laws on women's lives.

Similarly, the information on the number of women in Parliament and the provincial legislatures can be gathered by the trainers and put on a flip chart. The group can then discuss the questions posed.

Alternating between presentation and discussion is a good format to follow. The questions can form the basis of the discussion, but should not restrict it. Students can add questions of their own.

Questions on the Legal Position

Given the laws on divorce, abortion, sterilization and birth control, would you say that women have control over their persons? Should women have this control? Do you think any of these laws should be changed? If so, how?

Would it make any difference to women if there were more women in positions of power? What are some of the reasons women do not have positions of power in the structures and institution of our society? Can you really make changes if you do not have power? Or can you count on others to represent your interests?

Resources

A film film that might be used is:

Why Men Rape. A National Film Board of Canada documentary which gives the male perspective on rape. Although it doesn't deal with specific laws, it does give some insight about what motivates the rapist and society's response to the crime.

This is also a time to draw on community resources. Invite speakers to the group to present a short talk on some selected topic, and answer the group's questions. In some cases, it might be a good idea to discuss some of the questions before the speaker comes, so that trainees have a chance to formulate their thoughts. Speakers might include the nearest rape crisis centre, a prominent advocate of women's rights in the community, a local MP or MPP. (Because the police and justice system will be involved in the next part of the program, save their participation for then.)

MONTH 1, WEEK 4: MARRIAGE AND THE FAMILY

Goal

To have the participants look at women's roles in marriage and the family, and to have them examine their own attitudes about this topic.

Rationale

Women's beliefs and feelings about their roles in the family and marriage have a strong influence on their behaviour; and in the case of the battered wife, can affect her decision to leave or stay. In addition, the beliefs reflected in the society, and particularly by "helping professionals," affect the treatment battered women receive when they try to make changes and when they seek help.

If the problem of battering is defined as a problem of communication in the marriage, or as the inability of the wife to fulfill her assigned role, the remedies offered to a battered woman will be very different than those offered when the problem is defined as the male's inability to treat women decently, to express himself, and the fact of women's unequal strength and power.

Main Points

1. Girl's expectation of marriage: marriage as an accomplishment; marriage as a vocation.

2. The contribution of the woman to the marriage; the formal contractual contribution; is marriage a partnership?

3. Women's Role in the Family. A look at the role as: nurturer; housekeeper; mediator; cook; laundress; shopper; wage earner; sexual partner; administrator; organizer; social convenor; teacher.

   Look at the statistics on the make-up of the modern family; percentages of people that live in various types of arrangements, e.g. nuclear family with father as single wage earner, and mother full-time housewife.

   A look at the family from another angle. What types of services and support does the family need to function? Can the family provide for itself, and the mother provide for the family, or do we need a range of supports?

Format

Begin with asking participants to think back to their own expectations of what marriage would be like (whether they are married or not, they have had ideas and expectations). These could be listed on a piece of paper by each woman; then the group can share what they have written. Then ask the group to compare the expectations with the reality as they experienced it or as their family and friends lived it.

Questions for Discussion

1. Are women's expectations of marriage realistic?

2. Compare men's traditional role in marriage and women's traditional role.

3. Have you observed much change from traditional roles in the marriages you know? Why do you think this is?

4. In your opinion, what would be an ideal marriage arrangement?

Women and the Family

1. Discuss and list the traditional roles and responsibilities that women have in the family.

2. What is the stereotype of the ideal family like?

3. Discuss the makeup of modern families. Why is the stereotype so strong, despite the fact that this model is only one of many and does not represent the majority?

4. Can the family look after all the needs of its members? What supports does the family need?

5. Whose responsibility is it to look after the children, the aged, and the sick?

6. What is the role of daycare? To discuss this, you can begin with an exercise which describes one working woman's situation. After you give the details of her life pattern, ask the group to discuss what they think of this women, particularly her responsibilities to her family.

   (The woman has worked all her married life; when her children were born, she used a variety of childcare arrangements, from live-in help to boarding schools. Part of her work also required extensive travel.) After there has been some discussion of this woman's decisions, reveal to the group the identity of the woman: Queen Elizabeth.

Marriage

What are we taught about marriage? Look particularly at the laws governing marriage and divorce; look at the image in the media. What expectations do we have of marriage?

Family

What images do we have of family life? What was our own reality of family life, growing up? Where do divorce, wife assault, incest, child abuse, rape fit into the picture?

What response do we as individuals have when we are confronted with any of these? What response do we as a community have when we are confronted with any of these?

Women Who Don't Fit the Ideal

How do we as individuals respond to women who are the victims of wife assault, who are poor, who are having trouble coping?

How do we as a community respond to those who are different than the ideal image? Are these women helped, or hidden, or ignored, or blamed? What are the responses?

Resources

- Statistics Canada
- articles in popular magazines about marriage, the family, childcare
- laws and regulations applying to marriage, divorce, custody
- articles in feminist magazines about women's lives and women's identities

METHODOLOGY FOR THE SECOND MONTH

The courses for the second month are based almost entirely on the local situation, and depend on full and active input and participation by the students. The course outline provides guidelines, but most of the content is to be filled by local data, collected by the students, and student-designed material. We chose this approach because we felt, first, that if the course was to be relevant and adaptable to every part of the country, variations in local conditions and resources had to be recognized and provided for. Only those living in the locality can adequately identify these details.

Secondly, we felt that the design should in some way reflect the underlying philosophy of the program: the empowering of women. The course design should, then, involve trainees in their own learning in an active and positive way. And finally, we felt that women's experience is a rich source of material for learning about women, and that experience should be explored and utilized. Important insights and understandings can be gained from looking at the range and variety of women's own experiences. Therefore the outlines and directions for the course are to be used by the students to build their own course.

The second month focuses on the problem of wife assault and specifically on the procedures, personnel, resources and

services available in the community to victims of wife assault. The most effective way to learn about these resources and people is for trainees to go out into the community and make direct contact. Another advantage of this approach is that students will have first-hand knowledge of the situation, rather than simply an idea of how the system should work.

The group discussion which follow the direct contacts and research are very important. There should be an opportunity to reflect on and analyze the experience. Students need to place the particular learning in the wider picture of the problem. By examining their own experiences and analyzing their reactions and assumptions, students should be able to make links with the experiences of the battered woman. By examining their own learning process, what made sense for them, what confused and distracted them, students should be able to create learning situations which increase their effectiveness in working with others.

The section begins with an attempt by the students to understand the battered woman and her feelings. Experiential exercises are used to put participants in touch with some of the experiences and the emotions attached to them. After these efforts to understand the emotional and intellectual reactions of battered women, the group looks at the objective reality which the battered woman encounters.

MONTH 2 WEEK 1: THE NEEDS OF BATTERED WOMEN

Goal

1. To define the needs of battered women in concrete terms, and in a way that trainees will understand those needs both intellectually and emotionally.

2. To make an inventory of the helpers and services in the community.

3. To make contacts in the community.

4. To identify any gaps in the community in services to assaulted women.

Format

1. Begin the week with a discussion in class of what the concrete needs of a battered woman in your community are. Make sure that the list is comprehensive, including protection, housing, legal aid, welfare, childcare, counselling, and medical attention. Included also are psychological needs, such as the support of friends and family, and space and time to cope with the change required in behaviours, values and beliefs.

2. At this point, students should construct the ideal system. If this was the best of all possible worlds, what would help for the battered woman in your community consist of? This exercise should be done carefully.

3. The balance of the month is to be spent documenting and discovering exactly what services and what people are responsible for meeting the needs identified, and what their repsonses are.

4. In addition to the discussion, students should be given a number of articles to read about wife assault, so that their list will be comprehensive.

5. Those services and people who are to be interviewed in the coming weeks should be contacted for appointments during this time.

Community Inventory

Begin the community inventory by looking at the information system that exists. What services are there; how would a battered woman know about the services; and how would she avail herself of them? Are there special places like a woman's shelter? Is there a community information line? Is there recognition in the community of the problem? Are there translation services for women who don't speak English or French?

When the trainees interview the helpers and professionals in the community, they will ask whether these people see wife assault as a problem, and what kind of problem it is. They will ask helpers what roles they have in helping battered women; where they see gaps; and what further measures they would like to see taken. Trainees will also inquire about special policies and procedures, and whether there is a training program.

WEEK 2: THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM

Students will work with the instructors to compose a questionnaire for interviewing those in the criminal justice system. These contacts should include the police, crown attorneys, and lawyers. The object of the interview is to

1. make contact with the person in the system
2. find out from that person how the system works, according to his/her perspective
3. and, after the interview, compare the findings with what the ideal picture would look like.

This will give the trainees a chance to see at first hand what the reality is in the community, and to begin thinking about where there can be some improvement.

WEEK 3: THE MEDICAL, WELFARE AND SOCIAL SERVICE SYSTEMS

This week will follow the same format as the second week, with trainees composing a questionnaire for medical workers, welfare and social workers. Through interviews, trainees will examine the medical system (including public health nurses) and hospitals as well as private doctors and clinics; the welfare and housing assistance available and the personnel and procedures connected with obtaining them; and the social services available and the personnel, procedures, costs and approaches. Because there are a number of people involved, letters introducing the project and requesting information and interviews should precede interviews.

WEEK 4: SUMMARY OF SERVICES AND GAPS

Having spent the last three weeks examining the services in the community, the students will now be able to put together a list of exactly what services and what people are available, who they are and how they are contacted. In addition, they will put together another list of what services are missing, and what needs to be provided by the community.

Finally, a very preliminary plan of public education on the issue and the service gaps will be put together, and students will start thinking about choosing one community action project to work on.

section 2

skills

Section II

Designed by: Doreen Lichtenstein

Written by: Doreen Lichtenstein
Shirley Endicott Small
Barbara Waisberg

This section of the course uses 3 textbooks:

1. Getting Free: A Handbook for Women in Abusive Relationships by Ginny NiCarthy (Washington: The Seal Press, 1982)

2. The Battered Woman by Lenore E. Walker (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1979)

3. Stopping Wife Abuse by Jennifer Baker Fleming (New York: Anchor Books, 1979)

Trainees will want to read these texts over the course of the 8 months. Much of the course work depends on the learning in the texts. In addition, there are some additional reading assignments.

Trainees will be asked to keep a journal from the beginning of this section of the course to the end, and to record their thoughts and feelings about the work, their learning and themselves. This journal will be used as a reference by the trainees.

WOMEN'S LIVES
BEGINNING WITH OURSELVES

Introduction

This section deals with the interpretations we make of our lives and the influences which shaped us. We consider how expectations and role models influenced us; and look at other factors which also had an effect on us. After considering the shaping of our own lives, we look at how these same factors, events, expectations, shaped the lives of battered women.

We begin by looking at our own personalities, our pasts, our relationships with our parents, siblings, and relatives, and the events which marked our growth into adulthood. We also look at the influence of our cultural and ethnic background and our class on our identities as women and on our expectations and life choices. The reason we do this self-examination is because the more we understand ourselves, the more understanding we will have of others.

Method

The method used in this section is self analysis using a series of questions; group discussion of selected questions; and readings about other women's lives. The purpose of this section is to gain greater insight into ourselves and what

makes us tick. There are no right or wrong answers. No one will be asked to reveal anything that she doesn't feel comfortable discussing.

PART I LIFE STORIES

We begin by constructing our own life histories. Think back over your life and put together a picture of yourself, using the questions below as a guide.

WORKSHEET #1. Personality Make-up

1. How would you describe yourself? What are your most obvious features?

2. How do you think other people perceive you?

3. What influences have shaped you?

4. Do you show your best side to most people? To yourself? How do you show your worst side? To whom?

5. How do you respond to change? Do you make changes easily; do you control changes or do they control you? Are you flexible?

6. At what stage did you find making changes the easiest? When were changes most difficult for you?

7. How do you show different aspects of yourself in different situations? To different people?

8. What are your strengths?

9. What are your weaknesses? Are your strengths sometimes your weakness and vice-versa?

10. What do you see as the difference between yourself and the other trainees?

11. What do you see as the difference between yourself and battered women?

12. What do you have in common with others in the group?

13. What do you have in common with battered women?

Discussion

1. After participants have answered the questions on the worksheet for themselves, they can choose which, if any, of the first nine questins they want to discuss in a small group.

2. The last four questions (#10-#13) can be used as the basis of a large group discussion.

WORKSHEET #2. Relationships

1. Who are the people closest to you?

   -male
   -female
   -family
   -friends
   -mate

2. Do you feel you could manage without them? Do you need support in order to function?

3. Have those closest to you helped you through crises; traumas; vulnerable periods; depressions; anxieties?

4. How do you help others (emotionally)?

5. Do you feel you need a mate? Do you need to live with one? Are you living with one? Are you happier living with one? Are you happier when you are involved with a man? Why?

6. How do you feel about your female friends?

7. Do you get any support from the groups you belong to: community groups; church/synagogue groups; women's groups; friendship/social groups; work/school groups?

8. Do your children give you a feeling of security and support; anxiety and worry; a combination of both?

9. How do you think battered women's feelings about relationships affect their situations?

Discussion

Choose any of the first 8 questions to discuss in small groups of 3 or 4. The whole group should discuss question #9.

WORKSHEET #3: Feelings and Needs

We are never static: our feelings and needs continue to change.

1. What makes you feel good?
2. What makes you feel bad?
3. How do you feel about your body? Your "looks"?
4. Did you have a happy childhood?
5. What have been the high points in your life? What were the low points?
6. How do you feel about your cultural/ethnic origins? Do you feel you were enriched by them? How? Do you feel restricted by them? How?
7. What effect did your family's financial position have on your life?
8. What anxieties, guilts, pressures, and blocks do you continue to have?
9. Do you suffer from depression? Have you ever felt so depressed you didn't want to go on?
10. Do your moods change often, going up and down?
11. Have you ever felt you were disintegrating, having a breakdown?
12. Do you consider yourself "neurotic"?
13. Has your life ever taken an upward turn? Was this the result of:
    a) a new man/a love affair
    b) a new job
    c) a new way of looking at yourself and the world
    d) some new understanding
    e) other
14. Do you sometimes appear very different on the "outside" than you feel on the "inside"?

15. What do you think is the source of your problems

a) yourself
b) other people's treatment of you
c) the society
d) a combination of the above
e) other

Discussion

The group is to decide which questions it wants to discuss after everyone has worked through them individually.

WORKSHEET #4. Anger

Anger is one of the most difficult emotions to deal with. We are often are afraid or unable to express our angry feelings directly. Sometimes we take our feelings out on those who are closest but have not been the cause of our anger. Sometimes we express our feelings in inappropriate ways.

1. Do you express anger directly? How?
2. To whom do you express your anger?
3. When is your anger converted to sadness?
4. When is your sadness converted to anger?
5. When does a past situation trigger your anger again?
6. Many times we take out our anger on those closest to us though they are not the cause of our anger. Have you experienced this situation as:

   a) the subject (i.e. the one who is angry);

   b) the object (i.e. the one who is the object of the angry feelings)?

Discussion

1. Each individual is to consider the questions and think about her own situation.

2. Anger is a natural and valid emotion. It is important that we learn to deal with this emotion by expressing it in ways that do not harm ourselves or others. As a group, consider the first question. Use the following role play situations to explore ways of expressing anger. Have a volunteer for each example.

Situation #1

You have just discovered that your husband has spent the money you were saving for a washing machine on a colour T.V.

Situation #2

Your child has been fooling around at the table and has accidentally poured a bottle of grape juice on your best white tablecloth you use only for special occasions.

Situation #3

Your boss has just announced that he is not promoting you but instead he is promoting someone you feel is not as competant as you.

1) In each situation consider:

    1. What do you feel?
    2. What do you do?
    3. What do you say about your feelings?
    4. What do you not say?

2) Discuss with the group:

    1. Were there other things you could have done?
    2. Were there differences in the reactions in each situation? If so, why?

3) What ways do battered women have to express their anger?

WORKSHEET #5: Contradictory Feelings

Often people feel two opposite things at the same time.

1. Have you ever experienced at the same time, feelings of love and hate for the same person, happiness and sadness or fright and strength or hopeful and hopeless?

2. What makes you feel:

   a) ambivalent and indecisive
   b) depressed
   c) powerful
   d) vulnerable

3. Do you take alcohol or drugs to help you cope with your problems? Do you do this often; sometimes; never?

4. Do you sometimes feel you can overcome anything and other times feel you'll never get out from under?

5. Do you feel your self-esteem could be improved?

6. Do you think others have the same feelings about themselves as you do about yourself? Have you ever discussed these feelings with others?

7. Is there someone you envy? Why?

8. Does someone envy you?

9. Do you measure yourself against others? How does this make you feel?

10. Have you ever felt or been intimidated, threatened, abused or horrified?

    What were you able to do?

    How long did these feelings remain?

11. Did the incident(s) change your way of thinking about yourself? Did it change your life? How?

Discussion

1. After participants work through the questions on their own, select 2 for group discussion.
2. Ask each participant to write down 3 things that would increase her self-esteem.

   Ask the group to share these.

WORKSHEET #6: Goals and Aspirations

1. Do you feel it is possible for you to make changes? Why?

2. What would have to happen inorder for you to make the changes you want in your life?

3. Do you think it is easier to make changes when you feel good about yourself?

4. Do you think it is possible to make changes when you feel terrible?

5. What problems concerned you when you were young? How do you feel about these problems now?

6. What crises/problems have you overcome? How?

7. What crises/problems did you not overcome? Do they continue to affect you? If so, how?

8. What changes would you like to make in your life:

   a) material/situation
   b) feelings/self-esteem
   c) relations with others

9. What goals can you set to achieve these changes?

10. Do you think it is difficult for battered women to make changes in their lives? Why?

Discussion

1. Have the group consider the questions individually.
2. As a group, discuss questions #1, #4, and #10.

WORKSHEET #7: Social Background

Expectations

1. Think about your background in terms of the roles and expectations of women which your culture/community/religion taught?

2. What did your family teach you about being female?

3. What was/is women's role in the family and marriage? Have your ideas about this changed since you were young?

4. What was/is women's role in the world of work; or was marriage the only desirable career?

5. Did you have female friends when you were growing up?

6. Do you have female friends now?

7. Are there ways that women in your community support and encourage each other? If so, what?

8. Are there ways that women in your family supported and helped each other? If so, what?

9. Did you ever have feelings that did not fit with what you had been taught, or expected? If so, how did you handle them?

10. What one thing do you wish you had been taught when you were young? Why?

11. What one thing did you learn as a child that has been valuable for you?

Discussion

As a group discuss questions #8-#11.

PART II THE LIVES OF OTHER WOMEN

In this section we look at the lives of other women in order to understand their strengths and appreciate women's accomplishments.

Each trainee will be given a list of biographies about women and will select one that is of interest to her. She will read the book and then contribute to the class discussion, the insights she had from her reading.

By this point we hope that trainees will be rethinking some of their old attitudes and interpretations of their own lives and those of other women. This part of the course will encourage that rethinking. Trainees are asked to look at the stories of women's lives which reflect women's strengths:

(i) survival against terrible odds in the lives of immigrant women; pioneer women; women in concentration camps

(ii) survival despite deprivation and poverty

(iii) women who endured abuse: physical; mental

(iv) women who lived only for the men in their lives

Trainees should choose a book from one of the four categories. After reading the book, complete Worksheet #8.

Biographies and novels about women

(i) Isabella Leitner Fragments of Isabella, New York: Dell Publishing, 1978. A memoir of her life in Auschwitz concentration camp.

Anzia Yezierska, Breadgivers, New York: Persea Books, 1975. A young Jewish woman's struggle to free herself from the structures of immigrant society and from the "woman's role" assigned to her by men.

Margaret Laurence, The Stone Angel, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1964. A classic Canadian novel of a strong-minded woman.

(ii) Alice Walker, The Color Purple, Pocket Books, 1982. A novel depicting the struggle of a young black woman in the American South in early years of this century.

Maria Campbell, Halfbreed, Toronto: McClelland and Stewart, 1973. A Metis woman's autobiography.

Marilyn Robinson, Housekeeping, Bantam, 1982. An adolescent girl growing up in a "devastated" family finds strength from an aunt who enters her life.

(iii) Faith McNulty, The Burning Bed, Bantam Books, 1981. The true story of an abused wife who eventually killed her husband.

Linda Lovelace, Ordeal, Berkly Books, 1981. A young woman "forced into a nightmare of terror, humiliation and abuse" as a porn star.

Diana Trilling, Mrs Harris; The Death of the Scarsdale Diet Doctor, Penguin , 1982 Story of a "lady" killing her lover who had enslaved her emotionally, degraded and abused her.

(iv) Arianna Stassinnopoulos, Maria Callas, The Woman Behind The Legend, Hamlyn Paperbacks, 1981 The story of a famous opera star and her humiliation in her relationship with her lover.

Doris Anderson, Two Women, Toronto: Macmillan, 1978. A novel about a woman who built her life around her husband and her friend, a career woman.

Jessica Anderson, Tirra Lirra By The River, Penguin, 1978. A novel about an Austrialian woman, her struggle to free herself from a sultifying marriage in 1930s.

WORKSHEET #8

1. What are the similarities between the woman in the book and you?

   What are the differences?

2. Did you identify with any of the problems the woman had? Did you identify with any of the feelings the woman had?

3. Are there different ways of interpreting the biography you read?

4. Choose a character from a soap opera, a biography, your own life, a case history. Review your attitudes to this person. Can this person be seen in another way?

5. Collect the newspaper stories of battered women. How long were the sentences for the betterers? Who was presented in the story as the victim?

Exercise: New Stories

We usually think of our heroes/heroines as larger than life, and performing spectacular feats. But if we look more carefully at the everyday lives of ordinary women we can often discover another kind of heroism: the ability to survive with courage and dignity and continue with their responsibilities and work. Perhaps it is time to broaden the definition of heroism and recognize other definitions which are closer to our lives. Think of a woman that you know personally who has exhibited strength and courage in her life and you think could serve as a role model. Make some notes on this woman's life and then come to class prepared to tell the class about her.

A CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK FOR COUNSELLING

Goal

To develop an appropriate theoretical framework for counselling battered women.

Rationale

Traditional methods of counselling have not proved helpful to a battered woman. Often she leaves a counsellor or therapist feeling she has caused the violence; she is left feeling more helpless and hopeless than ever.

The theoretical framework that has proven most helpful in assisting battered women to make positive changes in their lives assumes that the goal is to help them move from passive dependency to self-determination and autonomy, to move from debilitating fear to energizing affirmative anger. The analysis starts with the negative consequences of the traditional female role:

Dissatisfaction (with the rigidity of the female role)
leads to--
self-blame--
leads to--
a limited sense of control
leads to--

limits on action (individual becomes passive, depressed, helpless)

Consciousness-raising (in counselling and in groups)

leads to--

awareness of status of women as second class citizens

leads to--

awareness that control is in the system

leads to--

awareness that system is to blame

leads to--

affirmative anger

Processes

The objective of this section of the course is to sensitize trainees to the important perspectives provided by this framework. Because these perspectives may be new to trainees, it is important that an appropriate non-judgmental climate be established. Trainees should be given explicit permission to have their own reactions to the material and allowed time to claim the theoretical framework as their own. The processes used in this section are thus particularly important.

1. The instructor should make it clear that she, too, is a learner; she should take part in all the processes and reveal her own feelings and new learnings to the class.

2. Keeping a personal journal is crucial to this section. Everyone is asked to record their feelings and be assured that there are no "wrong" feelings--all are valid.
3. Everyone will be asked to chart change in their ideas as the course continues. Then, as trust is built, these changes will be shared in the group as a whole.
4. Everyone is asked to keep a record of their dreams in preparation for the section on depression where one of the exercises involves interpreting dreams.
5. Time for "checking-out" of feelings has been built into this section--if it seems necessary build more into the programme. Learning to deal with each other's fears, pain and "break-throughs" is part of the preparation for counselling battered women.

A Cautionary Note on the Limits of Counselling

This section relies heavily on the insights of "feminist" therapy. However, some of the resources suggested for the instructor's information should be used with discretion. It is one thing to say that traditional role expectations are a "fundamental factor" (as Helen Levine argues); it is another to say they are the entire cause of emotional distress in the lives of women (as might be implied from Sturdivant, Wyckoff, for example). This course assumes the former.

It is true that women's behavior is sometime labelled "crazy" when it is merely the symptoms of abuse (see page 21 of Lenore Walker, The Battered Woman). However, if a woman simply cannot cope (for whatever reason), then trainees should be advised to refer her to a more highly trained therapist. The instructor should be prepared to help trainees build a referal list of suitable professional counsellors and psychiatrists.

This course assumes that the role of a para-professional counsellor is to provide advocacy and support. Sometimes this will be sufficient, other times it will not. For example, in some cases, there may be times when it is essential to refer a woman to a hospital for psychiatric help. The para-professional's role is to go with the woman and tell the hospital staff about the battering situation and then to keep in touch with both the woman and the professional staff. It is likely, however that the number of these cases will be small.

The expectations must be realistic: para-professional counselling is not a miracle cure. Where the psychic wounds are too deep it may only be able to help the woman build enough scar tissue so she can live at a greater level of autonomy and freedom than was previously the case.

Feminist Counselling

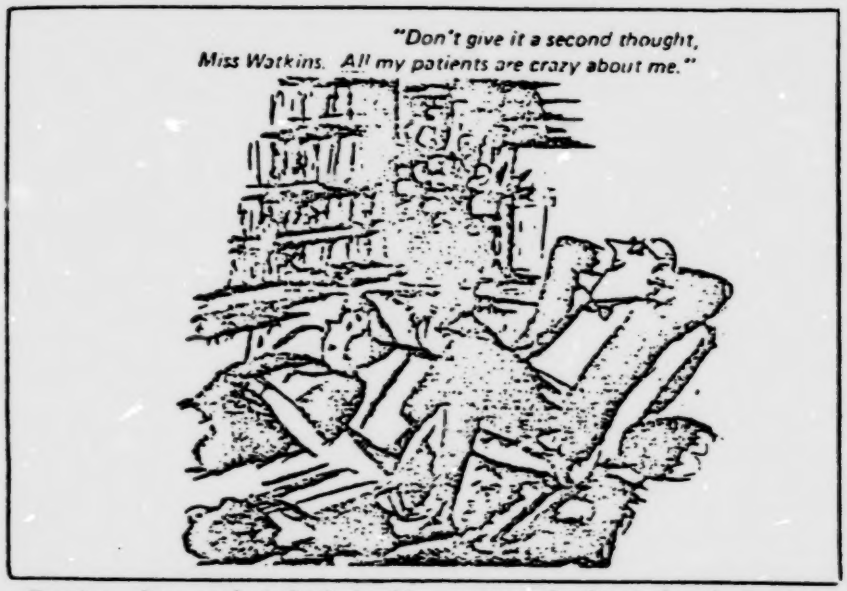
by Helen Levine

PEOPLE ASK: "What exactly is feminist counselling?" I have no absolute answer of blueprint. What I do know and have practiced is a helping process. That means working with women individually or in groups around their life situations as related to the society that has shaped them. It has to do with a vision of th possible, out of our own oppression, and involving our own potential. It is no mysterious, professional technique.

I came to feminist counselling by trying to combine my experience and skills as social worker with my awareness and experience as woman. It began as an attempt to translate into practice changing perceptions of myself and other women in this society.

As with most of us, this development did not arise apart from changes and crises in my own life. It is important to state that I have been on both sides of the institution and the desk, as provider and consumer of service, at different times in my life.

Beginning with my own experience, connecting my struggles with those of other women, is central to being a feminist and to feminist counselling: what happens to other women in this society can or does happen to me, and vice versa.



Despite class and individual differences, despite some uniqueness of temperament and personality, the broad outlines of women's lives are strikingly similar. We share many core experiences in family and workplace.

—We have been taught, for example, to define the central and primary task of our lives as marriage and motherhood.

—We have been conditioned to view happiness and contentment within restrictive and limiting contexts. Often the absence of severe problems with a mate, rather than presence of a rich, challenging life, is seen as the good life for women.

—We have been taught to stress the individual differences, the competition, and the hostility between one another; to be primarily loyal to individual men in our lives; and to blame ourselves and/or other women when troubles emerge.

Feminists no longer trust knowledge that lacks a clear connection with the daily reality of women's multi-level struggles to survive in, let alone change, a male-defined and alien society.

The "I" that was slashed out of school compositions when we were children, in teaching us to abstract ourselves from our own personal experience of the world, has been reclaimed by contemporary feminists and considered indispensable in the field of knowledge.

As Dorothy Smith writes, "This practice of ruling is largely if not exclusively the prerogative of men.... Our means of knowing and speaking of ourselves and our world are written for us by men who occupy a special place in it". And, again, "As we become capable of speaking to another of our condition, our relation to each other and to ourselves can be radically modified. In learning to speak our experience and situation, we insist upon the right to begin where we are, to stand as subjects of our sentences, and to hear one another as the authoritative speakers of our experience".

Contrary to the scientific, objective mode of theory and knowledge, feminists have returned to the roots of female experience to construct a new way of defining, describing, and explaining women's lives and struggles. A new framework has been developed for explaining and understanding the conditon of more than the world.

Feminists have begun to study and to document the exercise of power in the field of knowledge (i.e. the university). We have begun to understand that the import of women's lives has been largely erased, distorted, or misinterpreted by men in power positions, both in the private and public spheres of life.

The contemporary Women's Liberation Movement — one phase of historic feminist movements that preceded it — forged a new and important link for women between personal pain and political oppression. The link asserts that how women and men share their labour, money, and decision-making power at the domestic level is intimately connected with our respective roles in shaping the structures and institutions and goals of this society. The personal and the political are dialectically involved in all our lives, individually and collectively.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH CONVENTIONAL PRACTICE

Feminist counselling reflects the crucial link between the personal and political elements in women's lives, between feminism as an ideology (a way of understanding the world) and women's personal, every day struggles.

It rests on a critical analysis of the sexism embedded in the theory and practice of the helping professions, and the search for alternative kinds of help for women.

It is the antithesis of well-established personality and behavioural theories, of the various forms of Freudianism and therapies which have left us a legacy of the cult of the individual, and of the supposedly decisive role played by the psyche in shaping human behaviour.

A feminist critique of institutionalized counselling and therapy includes the serious charge that its theoretical underpinnings and its modes of practice have also left us a legacy of blaming the individual and in particular, women. The theory, for example, of maternal deprivation, reflects both the emphasis on psychologizing life experience, — and on inventing slick, sophisticated, and in essence cruel devices for holding women responsible for the outcome of personal and family life.

Women's search for help in clinics, hospitals, and agencies has frequently been disastrous. By and large, women have found that helpers stressed adjustment rather than change; individual, not collective solutions; individual pathology, instead of social conditions; weakness rather than strength; the psyche, unrelated to the economic and political conditions of women's lives.

and the authority of male experts, male management, and male decision-makers, in and beyond the home.

Underneath the sophisticated and subtle professional process, I would suggest, has often lurked blame, punishment, and social control. Women in trouble are frequently seen as sick, neurotic, negative, frigid, immature, hostile, not so bright, or otherwise inadequate.

To compound the picture, women have been trained to turn on themselves, to blame themselves, to endorse the professional diagnosis, and to accept individual guilt.

Let me give you a few of the more notable illustrations of the assumptions about women's lives embedded in the literature of the helping professions. Nathan Epstein the father of family therapy in Canada from his original Family Categories Schema:

The Father's Role. He is a successful breadwinner. In middle class families, he makes the decisions about money. He has ultimate responsibility for important decisions. He occupies the ultimate authority position in the family ... He enjoys and performs well in his marital sexual activity. He participates to some degree in caring for and in relationship to the children.

The Mother's Role. She performs efficiently and happily as the homemaker and mother. She enjoys marital sexual relations and functions satisfactorily in this role.

Erik Erikson:

Young women often ask, whether they can "have an identity" before they know whom they will marry and for whom they will make a home. Granted that something in the young women's identity must keep itself open for the peculiarities of the man to be joined and of the children to be brought up, I think that much of a young woman's identity is already defined in her kind of attractiveness and in the selectivity of her search for the man (or men) by whom she wishes to be sought.

Bruno Bettelheim:

....as much as women want to be good scientists and engineers, they want, first and foremost, to be womanly companions of men and to be mothers

Joseph Rheingold:

.... woman is nurturance ... anatomy decrees the life of a woman ... When woman grow up without dread of their biological functions and without subversion by feminist doctrines and therefore enter upon motherhood with a sense of fulfillment and altruistic sentiment we shall attain the goal of a good life and a secure world in which to live.

Theories of maternal deprivation are the tip of the iceberg that grew out of such sexist assumptions on behalf of patriarchy. And to think that women are accused of subjectivity!

It was out of an analysis of such theories and presumptions, midst a new grasp of the real substance of women's lives, that there began a search for some viable alternative to the predominantly sexist, chemical, adjustment-oriented services offered to women when we needed help. Out of the women's movement, we came to realize that the helping professions were largely designed and controlled by men (i.e. psychiatry), that embedded in their professional approach was a double standard of mental health for women and men. And that the double standard was, directly or indirectly, reinforcing the very oppression from which women were suffering.

Isn't feminist counselling just good counselling?

Feminists hold the traditional helping professions responsible for negatively defining, diagnosing, categorizing and labelling women's problems, struggles and behaviour – *out of political context*, – whilst frequently finding good reasons, legitimate causes, for men's and children's difficulties. Wife battering, rape and sexual assault, are questions most often put in terms of what women do or do not provoke. What women should or should not do or have done. Violence against women is the most clearcut example of common criminal assault by men having resulted in examining the victims' (women's) behaviour as cause.

Prior to the contemporary women's movement, the helping professions did not judge these questions worthy of attention, either theoretically or in practice. It was contemporary feminists who exposed for the first time issues of rape and wife battering; who connected and made visible the personal and political implications of such male behaviour in and beyond the family; who set up new services in the form of women's centres, rape crisis centres, transition houses for battered women and their children, without benefit of the money, buildings, staff, or status enjoyed by the helping professions.

The women's movement and its by now considerable literature has documented the impotence at best, and the destructiveness at worst, of dealing with traditional concerns – marriage, the family, and mental health – without a clear and active framework of the substance of women's lives. Added to the personal impact of being held subordinate as a sex, is the self-evident fact, seldom noted, that women crosscut all other disadvantaged/oppressed groups in our society, i.e. the poor, the elderly, welfare recipients, native peoples, etc.

Using the elderly as one example of a disadvantaged/oppressed group, with specific ramifications for women, the following is an excerpt from the conclusion to a 1978 Canadian study of women and aging.

"Their poverty is not the result of an accident. Women are poor in old age because most of them have devoted their lives without pay to their husbands and families and were led to believe that if anything happened they would be taken care of...

Another reason elderly women are poor is that they were discriminated against throughout their lives. Socialized to believe

that they need little or no education and training, women end up working for low pay at subservient jobs that do not give access to pensions

Although many men have similar problems in old age, women's almost total lack of preparation for it, combined with their preponderance at that time of life (140 women to every 100 men over the age of 70), make for a much greater negative impact on women ...

Lack of money : by far the most serious problem, because income affects every aspect of our lives

There are more than one million widowed and unmarried women over the age of 55 in Canada, at least two-thirds of whom are struggling to survive on incomes below the poverty line.

In fact, women are the major users of social and health services. The political question to be asked is "why?" and, what is to be done?

THE BASE OF FEMINIST COUNSELLING

Feminist counselling has thus emerged out of women's common experiences made visible by the women's movement, and a consequent critique of the traditional services available to women from the helping professions.

It is, in a sense, a positive wrought out of a negative, an opportunity built out of a crisis.

In a sexist and capitalist society, all women are inevitably at risk. It is in relation to this framework, and, in particular, to the new awareness of the impact of the traditional family structure on women's lives, that feminist counselling reflects major differences from conventional practice.

I would like to underline the centrality of the traditional family structure in today's society as one institution which has been a particularly effective vehicle in the oppression and containment of women. It is also an institution that the helping professions frequently strive to uphold in its traditional outlines, no matter what the cost to women in the process.

I would suggest that women in modern society have been slotted into a devastating primary responsibility for the care, development, problems, conflicts and outcome of members of the nuclear family unit. And that any intervention involving marriage and/or the family must actively take into account the unequal power distribution between husband and wife, in and beyond the home.

Feminists see the traditional nuclear family, at this moment in history, as a potentially dangerous place for women physically, and psychologically in that confidence in oneself and one's abilities as fully functioning individuals, in public or private spheres of life, is profoundly and inevitably eroded. Pauline Bard, in her studies on depression among women, suggests that an intensive commitment to marriage and motherhood as primary tasks in contemporary life is potentially crazy-making. And given the double standard of sexuality and aging, a task with little job security.

NO! Feminist counselling is intrinsically different. Let me explain.

I am often asked, "Isn't feminist counselling just good counselling?" My answer is a firm no, feminist counselling is intrinsically different. Let me explain.

By defining personal problems from a political perspective, feminist counsellors are able to move in new directions in helping. For example, when women are paralyzed with depression, they may well be on strike against killing roles and expectations. When women end up in psychiatrist's offices or in hospital, it may be that they are in fact political refugees from narrow and suffocating lives. When women are on public assistance and listlessly apathetic or exploding with anger, it may be that their responses are perfectly appropriate to their life situation. This reflects the linking of the personal and the political in the feminist counselling process.

Phyllis Chesler in *Women and Madness* cites studies that compare female ex-mental patients who returned to hospital with those who did not. The research found that rehospitalized women had refused to function domestically in terms of cleaning, cooking, child care and shopping. Feminist counselling assumes that women's work as defined by this society, is frequently a fundamental factor in the creation of what is called mental illness. And that social control is frequently a fundamental factor in what is termed treatment.

Feminist counselling, then, looks at the political implications of women's struggles and behaviour, at women's lack of real control over their own space and lives, in family and workplace, and at the consequent price paid by most women at one point or another in their life span.

Feminist counselling carries within its mandate a healing process, an educational process, and a political process, based on a feminist understanding of society, its institutions, and structures, and the women and men who live in it.

At best it is an integrated form of counselling. However, the political aspect of the work, an essential part of feminist counselling, is often least understood and most difficult to implement.

An example. In the case of battered women, feminist counsellors attempt to keep themselves and consumers in touch with the limitations as well as the possibilities of counselling.

Feminist counsellors recognize, for instance, that transition houses providing shelter, food, child-care and a safe, supportive environment are the basic, short-term service women need, and that counselling is additional and significant in a modest way, by comparison.

Beyond the question of concrete refuges for women is a further political consciousness, necessarily shared by feminist counsellors with consumers as part of the helping process. It is that transition houses as such – be they many or few – can only assist a small

number of women in any community, directly. They can, however, help to make visible, to expose to public view, a form of criminal behaviour by men against women that has been hidden and or condoned by patriarchal structures for centuries. Transition houses thus can be seen or used as a base for further political action.

Feminist counsellors are conscious of not perpetuating or reinforcing the commonly-held myth that a service per se, or personal counselling, can be the basic solution to the crime of violence or the threat of violence against individual women.

In the end, it is not an either-or question regarding political action, community resources or counselling services. It is instead the requirement of dealing with *both* the personal and political components that forms the base of feminist counselling, and differentiates this structural approach from others.

It has been one of the real strengths of feminist counselling that we have managed to preserve an emphasis on the personal, on helping some of our sisters survive, make important changes in their lives and contribute, whilst concentrating also on the struggle for fundamental institutional and structural change. It is the feminist insistence on the combined importance of process and product, in ways of working being of equal importance to goals sought or achieved, that has led to the integrated emphasis on caring about women today, whilst redefining and reshaping the tomorrow.

In feminist counselling, women are encouraged to support other women in purposeful ways. For example, women historically have turned to female friends and relatives in a personal crisis. To move beyond the personal, women in key positions in workforce or community are encouraged to offer jobs to, provide additional training for, invite as speakers and consultants, other women. The emphasis is not necessarily on the best but on the others.

I saw a video tape recently about women and chemical dependency. It placed a great deal of necessary emphasis on the problem of addiction, the need for women's services run by women, for women. It stressed the importance of support, the danger of stereotyped assumptions about women, how such problems have been kept invisible and need to be shared. It missed, I think, the importance of a feminist framework and the need for political action as a vital part of the service.

Without such a feminist/political thrust, we could find ourveives with many more small services for women, an expanded social service industry, and little structural change.

Though new and different services for women are a very significant step forward, there is a danger. The danger is that, given a service emphasis alone, a convenient myth is perpetrated of the problem having been effectively dealt with, as with, for example, transition houses for battered women.

No other people, no other group of such magnitude, lives in individual subservience . . .

◆ ◆ ◆

There is tremendous opposition to even considering women as an oppressed group . . .

It is not, in the end, only a question of those women who are physically battered or assulted. Violence against women is a threat, a warning, an ever-present possibility to all women that they may, at one time or another, be subjected to attack or control by a man or men. Women marry in the first place partly to have the protection of one man, and many of the basic fears and insecurities in women's lives stem from the threat of physical and sexual violence in the streets, at the workplace, and/or in the home.

It is the feminist analysis that must remain actively at the core of any service, by way of defining the personal and political needs of some women in particular and all women in general.

There is, however, tremendous opposition to even considering women as an opppressed group. The definition intrudes on every woman's and man's existence. What arena could, in fact, be more political?

Yet, no other people, no other group of such magnitude, lives in individual subservience, mainly in separate, isolated, family units, dependent on a member of the dominant sex that holds power personally, politically — and professionally.

It seems to me that fascism as political theory and practice hold to such central tenets as a master race; the glorification of male military conquest and violence in service of the fatherland; the persecution and/or extinction of genetically inferior peoples; the biological inferiority of women; women as breeders, sexual objects, and servants (i.e. kinder, kuche, kirche).

Is there not a connection yet to be made between the politics of fascism in relation to the state, and the politics of fascism in relation to women in this society?

And can feminist counselling, one means of tackling personal and political issues based on a feminist framework, be one small piece of the mammoth struggle to change this crippling structure of women's lives?

"All history attests that man has subjugated women to his will, used her as a means to promote his selfish gratification, to minister to his sensual pleasures, to be instrumental in promoting his comfort; but never has he desired to elevate her to that rank she was created to fill. He has done all he could to debase and enslave her mind; and now looks triumphantly on the ruin he has wrought, and says the being he has thus deeply injured is his inferior.... But I ask no favors for my sex.... all I ask of our brethren is that they will take their feet from off our necks and permit us to stand upright on that ground which God designed us to occupy."

Format:

A. Trainees reflect in their journals: What do I believe the goals of counselling should be? If I were looking for a counsellor what should I look for? How do I define 'personal growth'? These are shared in small groups or total group, depending on the size of the class, the general themes are recorded on a flip chart.

B. Theoretical presentation by instructor based on Chapter 8 of Sturdivant, Therapy With Women, the core values of the framework.

C. The class compares their list of ideas as drawn up in A and notes the agreements and disagrements. Instructor makes it clear that each trainee should feel that her own reactions are valid. Trainees are asked to record their reactions and feelings in their private journal.

D. Trainees reflect in private journalling:

> When I was growing up what messages did I recieve about how girls/women should behave? Where did these messages come from? How did I feel about these messages at the time? Later?

(If this has already been covered in an earlier session, this can be merely a re-call.) These reflections are shared, the common themes noted and put up on a flip chart. This list is then compared to the six core elements of the female role decribed by Keller (pp. 106-7

in Sturdivant, Therapy with Women). Allow time for discussion, ensure that no one need have felt all the 6 points on their own lives.

For a change of pace the group might sing Meredith Tax's "I Know a Young Woman Who Swallowed A Lie" on the Pete Seeger record, Banks of Marble.

E. Class works through Helen Levine's article "Feminist Counselling"--reading it out loud and discussing the issues she raises. Questions, disagreements, agreements are again noted in private journals.

F. Exercise: Instructor reads from Wycoff's Solving Women's Problems the three 'banal scripts' entitled "Mother Hubbard", "Poor Little Me" and "Plastic Woman". (Do not include the section in each script called "The Way Out") Trainees are then divided up into three small groups. Each group takes one of these scripts and role-plays the woman coming in for traditional therapy, using what they imagine the techniques might be from a therapist who has been trained in the ideas of Epstein, Bettlheim and Rheingold quoted in the Levine article. This is followed by the same woman receiving counselling from a counsellor who uses the ideas of Levine. Note: the objective of this exercise is to ensure the class understands the theoretical points made by Levine.

F. The instructor asks the group to reflect on the exercises in light of the Levine article. Trainees are asked to record what they themselves have learned, what new insights have come to them.

G. Trainees are asked to record their own feelings about the course, including the anxieties, the discomforts and problems at home caused by being in the course. They are then asked to be prepared to share one of these problems with the total group. The list of problems is put on a flip chart.

H. Theoretical presentation from instructor: a summary of Chapter 13 of Sturdivant's Therapy With Women. The main points should be listed on a flip chart.

I. Exercise: The class becomes a support group in order to observe and practice the ideas of Sturdivant. The instructor role-models the facilitator/therapist as described by Sturdivant. Trainees present the problem they listed in H. and these are worked through in the group. At the end of this exercise the class makes a list of what they observed in the group. This is compared with Sturdivant's model.

J. Trainees record their reactions to the model in their private journals. What did I like? What did I not like?

What new ideas have I learned? These are shared in small groups and common themes reported to the total group and recorded on flip charts. The instructor should date this list and keep it for future reference.

Resources:

Helen Levine: "Feminist Counselling" reproduced from Canadian Dimension 13(7) May, 1979, 32-36. Included in these materials.

Susan Sturdivant, Therapy With Women (New York: Springer Publishing, 1980) Part III

Hogie Wyckoff Solving Women's Problems (New York: Grove Press, 1977).

Additional Reading:

Jean Baker Miller Toward A New Psychology of Women (Boston: Beacon Press, 1976)

DEPRESSION

Goal

To understand why women are more vulnerable than men to depression.

Rationale

Much of the behavior of battered women seems to be best understood as strategies for warding off depression. In Hilberman and Munson's sample, almost the entire sample (60 women) had frequent visits to local physicians for depression, anxiety or suicidal behavior.

Format:

A. Instructor gives trainees hand-outs with 3 case histories of depression women. These are found in The Book of Hope by De Rosis and Pellegrino: Deborah, 22-24, Laurie, p. 60 and Julia, pp. 74-75. (Editorial comments by authors should be omitted.)

Trainees are asked to note any similarities in their own lives with the experiences of these three women. The details are described in private journalling. Then the commonalities are shared in small groups of 3 or 4. Class should be told that there is no need to share the

details -- just the situation that "was similar to" the case histories. The small groups then report the list of their "similarities" to the total group and these are recorded on a flip chart.

B. What is depression? Trainees given hand-out with a brief description of the symptoms and feelings.

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Some common symptoms of depression: tired, chronic, low grade fatigue, restless, moody, indecisive, chronic nagging, anxiety feeling of dread, lack of appetite, self criticism, chronic day dreaming, nightmares, suicidal thoughts, lack of concentration, needing more sleep, insomnia, tears, exhaustion, aches & pains, lassitude, interruptions in regular sleep patterns, losing interest in work, friends, famiy, sex.

SOME COMMON FEELINGS WHEN DEPRESSED

1. Self-blame, self-hatred, sometimes less projection of blame on others. How one may reinforce the other, may feel guilty about projecting blame on others. Somehow if one had done things differently, everything would have turned out well. Idea that we are all totally responsible for our own fate.

2. Failure, everything one has ever done may be seen as a failure, other people seen as a tremendous success, distortion.

3. Hopelessness, nothing will ever get any better, all of one's dreams, hopes are down the drain.

4. Paranoia, a feeling that everyone hates you or is neglecting you or bothering you. Distortion, expect more than your are getting from those close to you. Feel the grudges of long ago more acutely, feeling rejected, unloved, heightened ambivalence over desire to be taken care of.

5. Death Wishes -- desire to be dead, suicidal feelings, a tremendous sense of loss, worthlessness, a desire to impact on the world. Feeling no self at the centre.

6. Guilt -- feeling responsible for everything that has gone wrong or will go wrong.

7. Feeling of impending doom -- anxiety over possible illness, death of loved ones, oneself, non-specific terrors, something terrible is going to happen.

SOME VARIATIONS, TYPES OF DEPRESSION

1. Situational may be after death, rejection of a loved one, loss of job, usually clears up in a short time period, days, weeks, months, a year and depending on the particular situation and the personality.

2. Chronic may go on for years or may come and go. Such as during menstrual cycle, or recur on a chronic basis or

have cyclical highs and lows (sometimes called manic-depressions).

3. Serious (clinical or "psychotic") usually recognized by degree of severity. If one has ceased much of one's normal activity.

Note:

The signs may be similar to that of situational or chronic but here may be sleeping almost constantly, not eating, not able to function at work or at home, etc. (Extreme form: catatonia, total withdrawal). Cannot control by keeping busy, exercise, new interests, etc. which might help a milder depression.

C. Theoretical input by instructor:

Begins with statement re statistics on women and depression: Much more common among women, in-patient hospital admission 175 women for every 100 men, out-patient 383 women to 100 men. (The Book of Hope). What is the best way to understand this difference? Instructor presents argument developed in Sturdivant Therapy With Women, Chapter 10 and 11. This will be an elaboration of what was presented in previous session on conceptual framework. Basic thesis presented to class for consideration:

> Depression, low self-esteem, high anxiety naturally generated by highly defined female sex-role. Women are prevented from developing independence, assertiveness, discouraged from expressing anger or frustration.

D. Trainees discuss how their own experiences fit in with the theoretical input. The core elements of the female sex role should be listed on flip charts during this discussion. (See pp. 106-107, Sturdivant)

E. Exercise:

What type of personality gets depressed? Trainees are given the three exercises in The Book of Hope (pp. 44-46) This is followed by theoretical presentation by instructor using material in Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

F. Class discusses these questions:

1. In what ways do anxiety and depression go hand in hand, how do they relate to self-esteem?

2. Compare a situational and a chronic depression, or anxiety attack or both in your life or that of a friend or a client. How long did they last? How did you get over it? What made it better? What made it worse? How did other people respond? Was anyone really helpful?

3. Are there any personalities that never get depressed? What are their secrets? Can you teach yourself to not be this way? What are the pros and cons of having or not having a personality that is subject to mood swings?

G. Trainees build up a list of things which help to overcome depression. Instructor adds suggestions from The Book of Hope, Chapters 2, 3 and 4.

H. Exercise:

Class role-plays counselling a depressed woman. Trainees should be encouraged to utilize their own experiences for this. Note: emphasis here is on understanding the material in The Book of Hope.

I. Trainees are given the handout, "Particular Problems of Depression and the Battered Woman." Instructor presents highlights from Walker, The Battered Woman and Hilberman and Munson, "Sixty Battered Women". Class is asked to make note of these but detailed discussion will come later.

Particular Problems of Depression and the Battered Woman

1. Depression in battered women is an understandable reaction to being chronically abused and beaten and beaten down, criticized. However, a healthy situational reaction almost inevitably turns into a chronic depression and reinforces itself.

2. It is important to remember the difficulties of making changes at a time of depression, low tolerance level, low energy, chronic anxiety, lack of hope.

3. If the woman already tends towards depression anxiety and low self-esteem as many women do, she is going to have a double dose due to this type of marriage.

4. According to Lenore Walker, much of the behavior of the battered women seem to be designed to ward off depression. For example many of them attempt to exert a degree of control over their battering. Try to control time and place, which sometimes appears to be masochism but may be a desperate attempt to exercise some control over their life. It is important to keep in mind that depression may show differently for different personalities: Some may be up and down "manic depressive", some may put on a "good face" on the "outside" yet, may be chronically depressed "inside".

J. Exercise:

Trainees read Chapter 13, The Book of Hope, "Awakening Through Dreams." They go through their own personal journals and examine a dream that seems relevant to ideas discussed in the chapter:

> How does this dream indicate how I feel about things in my life?

(This might be given as an exercise to be done at home.) The thoughts are recorded in their private journals and then later, insights gained are shared with the group: What insights do I have about my own dream, my own life? Instructor makes a list on flip charts of the common themes.

K. Trainees read "Roots of Strength," Chapter 17, The Book of Hope, and discuss: What do we learn from these stories of five women who have overcome depression?

L. Exercise:

Using their journals, trainees do the exercises listed in Chapter 18, The Book of Hope.

M. Group Discussion:

1. Trainees share their feelings about doing the exercises in this section on depression.
2. Trainees share what they have learned about the topic of women and depression.
3. Instructor helps class to connect these feelings and learnings to the theoretical input. (Put up

summaries that have been recorded on flip charts; give adequate time for questions, discussion.)

4. Closing discussion on how the insights of the course might be useful when working with battered women. This might be in form of an evaluation form on this section combined with private journalling.

Resources:

Helen A. De Rosis, M.D. and Victoria Y. Pellegrino, The Book of Hope (New York: Macmillan, 1976)

Susan Sturdivant, Therapy With Women (New York: Springer Publishing, 1980)

Lenore Walker, The Battered Woman (Toronto: Fitzhenry and Whiteside Limited, 1980)

Elaine Hilberman and Kate Munson, "Sixty Battered Women" in Victimology 1978, 2(3-4): 480-470

Additional Reading:

Phyllis Chesler, Women and Madness (New York: Avon Books, 1972)

Jean Baker Miller, M.D. Toward A New Psychology of Women (Boston, Beacon Press, 1976)

Ann Hinton, Linda B. Sherby, Lynn G. Tenbusch, Getting Free: Woman and Psychotherapy, (New York: Grove Press 1982)

Hogie Wycoff, Solving Problems Together (New York: Grove Press, 1980)

LOVE, FRIENDSHIP AND SEXUALITY

Goal:

To explore the meaning of love, friendship and sexuality in the lives of women.

Rationale:

Many battered women report they still love their husbands in spite of the violence. Some violent marriages are held together by strong symbiotic bonds often defined by the women as 'love'. Many battered women also have few close friendships with other women. Reaching out and making friends is an essential condition if a battered woman is to improve her life. Furthermore, sexual jealousy and rape, accused of being alternately a whore and frigid are common experiences for battered women.

LOVE

Format:

A. Trainees begin by discussing their feelings about love:
   What does "love" mean?
   What does "falling in love" or "being in love" mean?
   Where did we get our ideas of love from?

B. Trainees reflect on the following questions in private journalling:

1. Have I ever been in a love relationship which I knew was not good for me, which was "bringing me down" or depressing me?

2. How difficult was it for me to get out of this relationship?

3. Have I ever felt "hooked" to someone, feeling that I could not live without him, that I would be terribly lonely and miserable without him?

4. Have I ever felt that I would never be able to find someone else again?

5. How did I feel as I tried to get out of that relationship?

C. Exercise:

Trainees then answer the questionnaire on love on p. 48-49 in NiCarthy, Getting Free.

D. Instructor leads the group through a discussion of romantic, addictive and nurturing love based on NiCarthy.

E. Love and Battered Women -- Discussion based on Walker, The Battered Woman -- concept of symbiotic relationship -- a bond seems to exist between the couple that says "we may not make it together, but alone we will surely perish." Problems of extreme jealousy of batterer, his strong control over her life, how this makes her fearful of making new friends and others leery of having relationship with her.

F. Group discusses implications for counselling battered women, linking their ideas to the practical and theoretical input in NiCarthy's Getting Free.

FRIENDSHIP

Format:

A. Trainees begin by looking at their own experiences with friendship. A guided meditation might get this process going. Revisiting our early experiences with friendship -- who could we rely on and for what? During adolescence what was it like for us? What feelings did we have to deal with in making a friend? Trainees write their private account and share the feelings that had to be overcome in making friends.

B. Trainees look at the range of relationships in their lives -- relationships with friends, neighbours, relatives and compare them with their "official" love relationship. Which provides the most support, the greatest intimacy? Do we share different parts of ourselves with different people? Put findings on a flip chart. Instructor helps to make a summary statement of the role of friendship in women's lives.

C. Exercise:

Group practices counselling a battered woman using the material in Chapter 13, NiCarthy, Getting Free. Role-play in pairs -- one person acts as counsellor, the other as counsellee with a third person as observer. Then change roles.

SEXUALITY

Format:

A. The class begins by reflecting on their own experience with sexuality using the following list of questions:

1. What does sex mean to us?
2. Is it an important part of our lives?
3. Do we know what we need or want sexually?
4. Do we imagine our needs and wants as being similar to other women?
5. Are our needs similar to or different from men?
6. Can we be honest about our needs?
7. Are we in a position to improve our sex lives? Do we have control over this?
8. Do we or did we ever have to pretend in our sexual relationships? What happened if we did? If we didn't?

B. Theoretical input by instructor using Barbara Seamen Free and Female:

-comparison of male and female anatomy
-critique of the standard judgment that male sexuality is superior
-female sexual organs more specialized
-women -- more sexual tissue
-women as sexually insatiable

-cross cultural study -- greater recognition and acceptance of female sexuality in some cultures than others

C. Participants do individual research on topic of sexuality using as reference Our Bodies, Our Selves. Meet in small groups of two or three to compare notes and prepare a summary of their reactions, their feelings about the topic to the total group.

The sharing of personal feelings would take place in small group. ("For me, the most surprising thing about this topic has been ____. I feel most uncomfortable with _____.") The summaries to the total group would be impersonal and anonymous. ("In our group there was the greatest surprise over _____ and the greatest discomfort with _____.")

D. Theoretical Input from instructor on various functions of sex in male/female relationships. Resource: Malfretti and Eidlitz Perspectives on Sexuality. Sex as reflecting our sex roles, as having a wide range of messages and meanings including:

Sex as an expression of hostility or punishment
Sex as a protection against alienation
Sex as a reward
Sex as a way of overcoming separateness or loneliness
Sex as exploitation for personal gain
Sex as an outlet from physiological and psychological tension
Sex as a form of 'togetherness'
Sex as a form of self-enhancement

E. Trainees read the relevant sections in Walker, The Battered Woman and Fleming, Stopping Wife Abuse and discuss the data therein in terms of the theoretical input.

F. Exercise:

Trainees read Chapter 18 of NiCarthy Getting Free and then role-play a counselling situation with a battered woman.

Resources:

LOVE

Ginny NiCarthy Getting Free, Chapter 5

Lenore Walker The Battered Woman

Additional Material:

Anna P. Hinton, Linda B Sherby and Lynn G. Tenbusch Getting Free: Women and Psychotherapy (New York: Grove Press, 1982) Chapter 6

Leo Buscalia, Living, Loving and Learning (Toronto: Random House of Canada Ltd., New York: Ballantine Books, Random House, 1982)

Ingrid Bengis Combat In The Erogenous Zones (New York: Bantam Books, 1972) pp. 157-209

FRIENDSHIP

Ginny NiCarthy, Getting Free, Chapter 13

SEXUALITY

Barbara Seaman, Free and Female (Greenwich Conn.; Fawcett Publications Inc., 1972) pp. 18-52.

Boston Women's Health Collective, Our Bodies Our Selves (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972)

Ginny NiCarthy, Getting Free (Seattle, Washington: The Seal Press, 1982) Chapter 18

Jennifer Baker Fleming Stopping Wife Abuse

Lenore Walker, The Battered Woman, Ch 5

James L. Malfretti and Elizabeth M. Gidlitz, Perspectives on Sexuality (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston,1972)

WOMEN AND ADDICTION

Goal:

To understand the reasons why women become alcoholics and/or heavy users of mood-modifying drugs.

Rationale:

The patterns of, and the reasons and motivations for, drinking to excess or becoming heavy users of mood-modifying drugs are different for females than for males in Canadian society. Also, many battered women have drinking problems or are heavy users of tranquillizers.

Format:

Instructor will order the kit Women and Addictions (1978), a resource kit available from Non-Medical Use of Drugs Directorate, Health Protection Branch, Health and Welfare, Ottawa. The class will go through the material in this resource kit.

WOMEN AND MENTAL ILLNESS

Goals:

To demystify the concept of mental illness

To help trainees understand the limits of para-professional counselling

To help trainees understand the nature of their role when a woman appears to be mentally ill.

Rationale:

Many battered women seek psychiatric help; sometimes they have symptoms of severe mental illness. However, often these symptoms disappear when the abuse ends -- usually this means she leaves the marriage and her husband leaves her alone. For some of these battered women who are making positive changes in their lives, short-term psychiatric intervention might be necessary till the chaos in their lives decreases. For others the support of a counsellor and other women will suffice. A few battered women, however, might have been so severely traumatized, especially if they were also abused as children, that it would be unethical to deny them the benefits of modern psychiatry.

There is a place, for example, for some kinds of mood-modifying medication, provided it is monitored carefully and supplemented by supportive counselling. To understand the dangers for women in some types of psychiatric intervention is

one thing; to condemn all psychiatry is another. The articles which are suggested for reading and discussion in this section emphasize the dangers of traditional psychiatry for women. Because battered women have been some of the victims of traditional psychiatry it is important that the trainees be familiar with the material in these articles. However, the reading material should be understood as a tool for deepening the understanding of trainees -- to help them understand when a situation calls for a referral to a psychiatrist.

Format:

The instructor will be familiar with all the material in Women Look at Psychiatry, edited by Smith and David as well as the relevant information in "Sixty Battered Women" by Hilberman and Munson.

A. Trainees will be asked to read three first hand accounts of mental illness in Women Look At Psychiatry:

1. "Shrink, Shrank, Shriek" by Barbara Findlay
2. "Struggling to be Born" by Judi Chamberlin
3. "Women's Oppression and Psychiatric Oppression" by Judi Chamberlin (a critique of the feminist analysis).

B. The class discuss these articles using the following questions as a guide:

1. Why has there been so much criticism recently of the way in which the psychiatric profession treats the mental illness of women?

2. How did the psychiatrists make the 'mental illness' of Judi Chamberlin and Barbara Findley worse?

3. What is the difference between "going crazy" for working class and middle class people?

4. Under what circumstances might mood-modifying drugs (sedatives, anti-depressants, tranquillizers or sleeping pills) be useful for women? What are the dangers?

5. If a woman you were working with was beginning to experience severe emotional symptoms (hallucinations, for example) how might a psychiatrist be of help? What should your role as a para-professional counsellor be under those circumstances?

Resources:

Women Look At Psychiatry, edited by Dorothy E. Smith and Sara J. Dawd Vancouver, B.C.: Press Gang Publishers, 1975

Elaine Hilberman and Kit Munson "Sixty Battered Women" in Victimology, 1978 2(3-4) 460-470

PROFILE OF A BATTERED WOMAN

This section is to be photocopied for the participants and used in combination with the book The Battered Woman by Lenore Walker.

GENERAL PROFILE

All ages, stages; rich and poor; well educated and uneducated; employed and housewives. All social classes, ethnic and religious groups.

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

In certain cultures slapping or pushing may not be defined as battering or abuse. This is not necessarily a sign that there is more or less battering in that group. Each group thinks that the problem of battering occurs in other groups but not its own. Some groups regard exposure of the problem as disloyalty: going to complain to the outside world is seen as a real betrayal. What is important is the meaning of her culture to the battered woman and the ties she has with her own community. These feelings and ties must be respected. In

addition there are special practical problems which immigrant women face as well: language, isolation, fear of the unfamiliar. There are special problems for rural battered women, Francophone, Native and Immigrant, who encounter additional barriers to services.

SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS

Be aware of the different difficulties associated with different income brackets. For example, women in higher socio-economic brackets may not be able to get their hands on cash though everyone feels they ought to be able to. There may be something they can sell or something stashed away but many husbands keep their wives cash poor, and check on their belongings. The drop in living standards may seem devastating and it is frightening for them to consider. They may or may not be able to stay with friends or relatives. Services usually tend to assume a working-class clientele and offer minimal material supply. For a middle class woman, going to welfare could be more difficult emotionally, although they may be treated better than poor women once they make contact. Poor women have less resources and less contacts but are not facing as drastic a change in living standards. Trainees should question whether different types of women receive different treatment. Is there differential treatment based

on: class; race; age; appearance? Trainees should also consider what the lack of money and resources mean in terms of options for individual women.

PERSONALITY TYPE: OUTWARD APPEARANCE

Battered women may have any type of personality. They may be strong or weak, pasive or aggressive "sweet" or "not so sweet" loud or soft. They may be highly organized and competent, the type of woman that people admire. In short, may be like us.

INTERNAL FEELINGS: ON THE INSIDE

The following words describe some of the feelings of battered women: Depression, ambivalence, hysteria, frustration, guilt ridden, helpless, feels responsible, to blame for husband's problems on "sickness", fearful, suicidal; also homicidal, confused, vulnerable -- terror, immobilization; love for her children and her husband.

Note how similar these feelings are to our feelings at some times and to the feelings of women who have not been physically abused. Note that many of these feelings are considered the normal female feelings.

BEHAVIOURAL CHARACTERISTIC AND FEELINGS
(from Lenore Walker)

1 Low self esteem

2. Denies degree of fear, terror, anger.

3. Stress reactions -- other psycho-physiological complaints

4. Spends a great deal of time and energy plotting her various moves and conversations, so as not to upset her husband -- to no avail.

5. Sometimes drinks and takes large amounts of drugs to cope with the stress and fear.

6. Under-estimates her feelings (negative) and the beatings

7. Unlimited patience, unrealistic hopes.

BELIEFS
(from Lenore Walker)

1. Believes all the myths about battering -- example, "drinking causes his behavior" "He does it because he's sick" "I deserved it and/or provoked it."

2. Believes in "home" and tradition.

3. Believes that the beatings will never happen again. Makes herself believe her husband when he sears this. Lives in a world of fantasy about the beatings.

4. Does not believe she is a battered woman. Finds it very difficult to stick this label on herself. Someone else is worse off.

5. Believes she deserves the beatings because she wasn't "perfect" enough or did something wrong.

QUESTIONS TO THINK ABOUT

1. How does society and social structures reinforce or promote traditional beliefs and feelings abouts women's responsibility for her husband's behavior. Where do women hear opposite messages: that the woman is not responsible for her husband's behavior; that she is a worthy individual in her own right; and has the right to be free of abuse?

2. Why do you think that many of the feelings battered women have are masked or blocked or denied? Why is rage buried, and rarely experienced directly?

   Rage -- see not Hilberman's, p. 465 -- re the intense struggle in the women to control aggressive impulses. Think about what would happen to them if they did experience the rage, the panic, the intense fear of the unexpected, directly? What happens, when and if they do? Note, Walker's surprise at the relatively low anxiety level considering the degree of the stress. Walker speculates (p. 51, Walker) that a fear response motivates a search for alternate ways of responding that will avoid the threat; hormones respond to immediate stress, anxiety levels return to normal.

   Note : People can live with only certain levels of

anxiety: then they crack up.

Why do you think that battered women take drugs, alcohol? Why do doctors prescribe drugs for battered women?

Think how women have been socialized into ambivalence in terms of double messages; the need to live and program ourselves for others.

Think of confusion the battered woman constantly lives with: the degree of the fear and the immobilization, -- the threat to life if she stays, or goes.

See Walker's list of ambivalent feelings for battered women, p. 169. Try to comprehend what this would feel like, the consequence of this degree of confusion.

Lenore Walker's Theory of Learned Helplessness, Ch. 2, pp. 42-54. Note her explanation (p. 49) that "repeated batterings like electrical shocks diminish someone's motivations to respond, increase her passivity." No matter what I will do I will have no influence. She cannot think in terms of alternatives. "I am too incapable and stupid to learn how to change things" She becomes more depressed, anxious. What do you think of this theory?

Katherine Conroy has made the point that the learned helplessness response is a highly functinal one; that when the battered woman does reach out for help, no one is there for her.

Not reaching out may therefore be good judgement. It is useless to keep banging your head against the wall.

The failure is society's failure to her . The battered woman's adaptation is a functinal one. There is a danger that people could misinterpret this as blaming the victim istead of the structures.

LABELLING

Think constantly about how careful one must be with descriptive labels.

"The battered mate is characterized by long suffering martyr-like endurance of frustration." Although this was probably not meant in a pejorative sense, it could be used against the battered women. It is better to stay away from words which labvel battered women and do not help our understanding. (See Vicki Boyd, Karil Klingbeil, otherwise excellent list of Behavior Characteristics of Domestic Violence.)

Also from Boyd-Klingbeil, "Participates in pecking order battering" which is said to be characteristic of Batterer Battered and Child, which is not necessarily true of any but the batterer and implies an equal level of pecking order battering. We would also critique the "Learns which behavior events will either divert or precipitate mate's violence, but

level of carelessness increases", judgement of lethality potential deteriorates over time. We would agree with the last point but while some behavior can be predicted much cannot be.

Although descriptions are helpful as a guide, in the end, trainees must remember that everyone's situation and behavior are somewhat different.

THE PROFILE OF THE BATTERER

Look at those aspects of the batterer's personality that are similar to those of the battered woman.

From Lenore Walker, P. 36,

Low self esteem; belief in all the "myths"; a traditionalist who believes that the male is superior, the boss of the family.

Note important differences: the pathological jealousy of the batterer; and blaming others for all his actions and problems.

Discuss jealousy in terms of : (i) power and control (ii) lack of reality base (iii) different manifestations.

THE DUAL PERSONALITY

Often the man has one face for the public and another for his family. No one believes that such a "nice guy" would do such a dreadful thing -- The degree of belief may mount with class and status: if man is a "professional" and others do not see this side of him, then it is easier for may people to deny its existence.

-often uses sex as an act of aggression
-has severe stress reactions
-uses drinking and wife battering to cope.

But does this in fact act as a release of tension? Why do men use battering instead of other outlets? Do they explode against others in the same way? Why not? See Chapter #1 NiCarthy The Masculine Role. Other characteristics on Boyd-Klingbeil list:

- "secret depressions"
- "emotional dependency", "childlike narcissim", "insatiable ego needs" believes self to have poor social skills, -- relationship with wife is closest he has ever known, very "now" oriented. Frequent promises for great changes in the future. Controls with homicidal or suicidal threats (if leaves or threatens to). Attempts to control every aspect of the wife's life by constant mnitoring of her. Believes his forcible behavior is "good" for the family, that it will keep it secure.

  Often remains in contact with his own family, though he keeps wife from contacts with her family and friends.

Note: How do these traits mentioned above shape batterer's actions? What effect do these behaviors have on the wife and children over a period of time?

PROFILE OF CHILDREN
(reference: Boyd & Klingbeil)

Poor self esteem; poor definition of self; poor impulse control; depression; psychosomatic illness; loneliness; fear; behavior: running away, acting out, high risk of alcohol, drugs, sexual acting out, absences from school; feelings of stress; continual hopefulness that situation will improve, mixture of hope and depression that there is no way out.

Blames self for parents' fights, separations, divorce; may develop decptiveness; often uses violence as a technique for solving problems; suicide attempts, thoughts of murdering parents; carelessness.

Look in your texts for references to the tendency for child abuse by either the batterer or the battered. Consider the effects of the parents' behavior on the children and the effect of the children's behavior on the parents. (Think in terms of different ages, stages and possibilities.)

PROFILE OF THE BATTERING

1. The Violent Event

a. Read the chapter in Violence Against Wives by Dobash and Dobash.

b. Look at what preceeds the violent event. What triggers it? Arguments over money, homemakeing duties, often trivial. Others wake in the middle of the night in order to batter. Often event occurs immediately after trigger; sometimes it is delayed until the batter feels the woman is in a particular position of disadvantage (real or imagined.)

c. How can violence be understood in terms of the triviality of the trigger?

d. How can violence be explained in terms of subordination or domination, that is, men feeling their wives are there for their needs and pleasure, and that they legitimately can make any kind of claim on their wives.

2. Avoiding Violence: -- Is it Possible?

The only way is to get away. This is usually not a viable option in terms of the moment and the act. If women answer back during an argument or ask a question, they risk getting beaten. If wives agreeto whatever they are accused of, they also get beaten. If woman "acts up", the batter beats to discipline her, to keep her in place. If she is "passive" the batter beats her to make sure she stays that way.

3. How Women Feel Afterwards

Women rarely fight back; they are upset, immobilized, "in hiding", crying, angry, shamed. Men usually still feel angry; they have little remorse.

4. Type of Violence

punching, kicking, choking, rape

5. Type of Injury:

black eyes, broken bones, teeth missing, internal bleeding, scarred faces and finally death

6. Presence of Others:

Usually no observers at beginning. But this may change in time with children, sometimes friends or relatives. Consider the reactions of the observers (fears).

7. Psychological Abuse

Often degrading terms such as "whore" are used by the batterer. The battered woman feels humiliation. There are also verbal threats and some women state the verbal abuse hurts evenmore than the physical abuse. It is also important to understand other coercive techniques, such restrictions on friends, on activities, on money, on opportunity and time. The battered woman exists in an increasingly narrow world.

8. Cycle of Violence Theory by Lenore Walker

a. Read Walker's description of the 3 phases and the symbiosis.

b. Summarize each of these phases.

SOME IMPLICATIONS OF THE CYCLE OF VIOLENCE THEORY

1. Consider the stress, the degree of confusion and ambivalence that this sets up in the women; the terror, the frustration, the unpredictability, the lack of control, the impossible hopes. Consider how much more difficult it is to carry out a complete plan of action and successfully leave since the action keeps shifting and changing. Battered women suffer burn out.
2. Consider also the seductiveness of this scenario: She is forced to play by her husband's rules. She must participate in trying to control the situation, in placating him, in not upsetting him, in obeying him, in order to stay alive.

After playing out this scenario or something similar, many, many times, it is very hard to experience yourself as a separate human being that could survive on her own.

STAYING, LEAVING, RETURNING, GETTING FREE

Note that most women do leave at some point for at least a temporary period. Some leave permanently as soon as some alternatives, help or support is found.

1. Consider the effects of the lack of self-esteem and having been dominated and controlled for so may years.
2. Look at the degree of the fear, the immobilization, the very real terror that he will come after her to kill her or her relatives.
3. Look at the very limited options of some women because of poverty, lack of education or job skills, single wage poverty. Look at the drop in standard of living of middle or upper class women who have access to their husband's money. Also there is the possibility that the man will get custody of the children if he has the status and money; as well as the dangers of shared custody. Once women do leave, may experience what Del Martin calls the "Big Runaround": the difficulties of getting the social service structure to be really helpful; and the difficulties with the courts. In addition, women who want to leave have to deal with the husband's promises he will change and reform. And they also experience a fear of divorce, of being on one's own.

GETTING FREE

Finding suitable support structures, the ongoing degree of support from friends and legal protection.

How does she manage to stay with so few resources?

How does she manage to leave or to keep her sanity, with so few resources?

Why isn't there protection and support for battered women?

POINTS OF VULNERABILITY FOR BATTERING IN THE LIFE OF THE BATTERED WOMAN

1. Pregnancy: Why does so much battering begin in pregnancy?
2. Handicaps: If the woman is handicapped, retarded, or ill.
3. At a Point of Change or Separation: If husband knows she is about to leave or is making some changes that threatens his authority.
4. Standing Up for Herself: especially if she has not done so in the past
5. Points of Withdrawl: if he thinks she is not paying enough attention to him.

LOOK AT A DAY IN THE LIFE OF A BATTERED WOMAN

- daily negotiations on a day to day basis from a greatly disadvantaged position
- innumerable attempts at leaving (many of which are blocked by husband or circumstances)
- the particular fears, hopes, attempts to predict husband's behavior, the degree of the tension
- tremendous energy in just trying to survive and ensuring the survival of the family
- each successive violent episode leaves the woman with less hope, less self-esteem and more fear

CHANGES IN THE ATTITUDE TO VIOLENCE
(see Dobash ch. 7)

- the men become less concerned, less remorseful
- her growing hopelessness, diminishing self-esteem, loss of affection for him
- as physical abuse becomes more frequent and severe it dominates the relationship

PROVOCATION

The idea that nagging provokes or causes the violence is not merely a justification by the man for his behavior but is very much a part of our cultural beliefs. It is also used by researchers and representatives of social agencies to explain wife beating. See Dobash and Dobash p. 133. Victim blaming

then justifies other's inaction. It is interesting to note the contradictory behavior defined as provocative by researchers or husbands.

See Dobash and Dobash, p. 35: Aggression and nagging/submission; emsculation/dominance; being too talkative or too quiet; too sexual, or not sexual enough; too frugal or too extravagant; too often pregnant or not often enough. The only pattern discernible is that the women's behavior represents to the husband some form of failure or refusal (real or imagined) on the part of the woman to comply or support his husband's wishes or authority.

The Dobashes note the naivety and insidiousness of professionals' believing in victim precipitation since this represents an acceptance of physical violence and implies that the woman has no right to negotiate, no right to challenge even unjust decisions.

The belief of female provocation is socialized into us all. The idea that women cause the violence is rooted in psychiatry and western culture.

THE SEXUAL NATURE OF VIOLENCE

The psychoanalytic idea that violence is a manifestation of individual pathology created by an imbalance in male dominance and female submission and developed through inadequate mothering implies that women (first as mother, then as wives) are the primary source of violence, including that which is directed at them.

According to Dobash this theory has been criticized and challenged and never adequately supported but is very popular in patriarchial society with the media, and underlies the need for the training in the helping professions.

SUMMARY QUESTIONS ON BATTERING

1. What do you think are the most important things to understand about a battered woman, about her feelings, her family, her life, her future possibility for change?

   Answer the same question separately in terms of the batterer and the various aspects of his life.
2. Using various resource materials, give your own explanation for why women are batttered, why men batter, and why it is so difficult to get out of a battering relationship.
3. Is the battered woman "normal" or "neurotic"? How is she

similar to you and I? How does she differ? How does her life differ? Is the batterer a "normal" man? In what way is he like the other men that we know or live with? How is he different? How does his life differ? Is he similar to a rapist? In what ways?

4. Why do men batter?

5. Men often get much sympathy when they confess to their battering (ex. Actor David Soul) story of his battering -- several marriages, People Magazine). People regard them as victims, explain why they couldn't help it, how they are trying to conquer it. In contrast we often look down on battered woman even if she confesses her plight or tries to change it. She is "weak", "masochistic" and somehow did somethng to deserve it. Explain this difference in attitude.

6. In terms of bettered women and the "myths" about them and their battering which "myths" do you find keep re-occurring in your own mind. Why?

   Do they remind you of anything in your past or present life. How do we get rid of these "myths"? What are your suggestions?

7. Try to imagine yourself as a battered woman. How would your feelings, your marriage, your life, your children's lives, your position in society, people's perceptions of you change? Give a complete "psycho-social" picture.

How would your feeling or you life remain the same? As a battered woman what changes could you see taking place over time -- use either a five, ten or twenty or thirty year marital life span.

WE ASK ALL THE WRONG QUESTIONS

In the past, we have asked these questions:

Why does she stay?
Why is she so weak?
Why doesn't she have any self-respect?
What does she do to provoke it?
Doesn't she enjoy the abuse?
Don't the men do it because of alcohol or drugs or unemployment or financial pressures?
What about the men that are battered?

Now that we understand more about battering, we ask these questions:

WE SHOULD BE ASKING

How does she survive on a day to day basis?

How does she manage to raise her kids, keep her job, her household, her sanity at least a good deal of the time?

Where does she get the strength to manage all this?

We cannot help but be impressed with the battered woman's ability to survive.

Resources

Vicki D. Boyd and Karil S. Klingbeil, Behavioral Characteristics of Domestic Violence (Seattle, Washington: 1978)

R. Emerson Dobash and Russell Dobash, Violence Against Wives (New York: Free Press, 1979)

Jennifer Baker Fleming, Stopping Wife Abuse (New York: Anchor Books, 1979)

Elaine Hilberman and Kit Munson, "Sixty Battered Women" Victimology, 1977-78 2(3-4), 460-470.

Ginny NiCarthy, Getting Free (Washington: The Seal Press, 1982)

Lenore E. Walker, The Battered Woman (New York: Harper Colophon Books, 1979)

RELIGIOUS ISSUES AND COUNSELLING BATTERED WOMEN

The role of religion is often ignored when considering the problems of battered women. However, experience has shown that religious ideas and teachings often loom large in the thinking of battered women. For example: "I can't leave him...marriage is a promise to God" or "I won't press charges because Jesus taught us always to forgive". Sometimes these ideas remain unspoken in a counselling situation, especially if the woman suspects the counsellor might ridicule her. The impact of her religious heritage, however, remains.

The following article gives trainees a frame of reference for discussing religious issues as they affect battered women. After reading the article trainees could be asked to role play counselling a woman who feels her religious heritage does not permit her to leave her husband or to lay an assault charge.

A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence

A Commentary on Religious Issues in Family Violence was written by Rev. Marie M. Fortune, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ and Director of the Center for the Prevention of Sexual and Domestic Violence. Substantial contributions were made by Judith Hertz from the National Federation of Temple Sisterhoods.

The Importance of Religious Issues: Roadblocks or Resources?

The crisis of family violence affects people physically, psychologically, and spiritually. Each of these dimensions must be addressed, both for victims and for those in the family who abuse them. Approached from either a secular or religious perspective alone, certain needs and issues tend to be disregarded. This reflects a serious lack of understanding of the nature of family violence and its impact on people's lives. Treatment of families experiencing violence and abuse requires integrating the needs of the whole person. Thus, the importance of developing a shared understanding and co-operation between secular and religious helpers to deal with family violence cannot be emphasized too strongly.

Occasionally, a social worker, psychotherapist, or other secular service provider will wonder, "why bother with religious concerns at all?" The answer is a very practical one: religious issues or concerns which surface for people in the midst of crisis are primary issues. If not addressed in some way, at some point, they will inevitably become roadblocks to the client's efforts to resolve the crisis and move on with her/his life. In addition, a person's religious beliefs and community of faith (church or synagogue) can provide a primary support system for an individual and her/his family in the midst of an experience of family violence.

For a pastor, priest, rabbi, lay counselor or other person approaching family violence from a religious perspective, there is little question about the relevance of religious concerns: these are primary for any religious person. Rather, they may doubt the importance of dealing with concerns for shelter, safety, intervention and treatment. "These people just need to get right with God and everything will be fine." This perspective overlooks the fact that these other issues are practical and important as well. Family violence is complex and potentially lethal; these seemingly mundane concerns represent immediate and critical needs.

When confronted with a personal experience of family violence, like any other crisis whether chronic or sudden, most people also experience a crisis of meaning in their lives. Very basic life questions arise and are usually expressed in religious and/or philosophical terms. Questions like, "Why is this happening to me and my family?" or "Why did God let this happen?" or "What meaning does this have for my life?" are all indications of people's efforts to understand, to make sense out of experiences of suffering and to place the experiences in a context of meaning for their lives. These questions are to be seen as a healthy sign because they represent an effort to comprehend and contextualize the experience of family violence and thereby regain some control over their lives in the midst of crisis.

Thus for many individuals and families in crisis, the questions of meaning will be expressed in religious terms, and more specifically, in terms of the Jewish or Christian traditions, since the vast majority of people in the U.S. today grew up with some association with these traditions. Many continue as adults to be involved with a church or synagogue. In addition, Jewish and Christian values overlap with cultural values of the majority American culture, so most Americans carry a set of cultural values, consciously or unconsciously, which are primarily Jewish or Christian in nature.[1]

Religious concerns can become roadblocks or resources for those dealing with experiences of family violence because these concerns are central to many people's lives. The outcome depends on how they are handled.

The misinterpretation and misuse of the Jewish and Christian traditions have often had a detrimental effect on families, particularly those dealing with family violence. Misinterpretation of the traditions can contribute substantially to the guilt, self-blame, and suffering which victims experience and to the rationalizations often used by those who abuse. "But the Bible says . . ." is frequently used to explain, excuse, or justify abuse between family members. This need not be the case. Re-examining and analyzing those Biblical references which have been misused

[1] The discussion of religious issues included here reflects a Jewish and Christian perspective due to the background and experience of the authors and contributors. Although there are other religious traditions also present in the pluralistic American culture, the focus of this discussion is limited by the authors' perspectives and experiences.

can lead to reclaiming the traditions in a way which supports victims and those who abuse while clearly confronting and challenging abuse in the family.

A careful study of both Jewish and Christian scriptures makes it very clear that it is not possible to use scripture to justify abuse of persons in the family. However, it is also clear that it is possible to misuse scripture and other traditional religious literature for this purpose. This is a frequent practice (see below). Attempting to teach that there are very simple answers to the very complex issues which people face in their lives is another potential roadblock within contemporary teachings of some Jewish or Christian groups. Thus, religious groups have often not adequately prepared people for the traumas which they will face at some point in their lives: illness, death, abuse, divorce, and so forth.

> "Keep the commandments and everything will be fine."
> "Keep praying."
> "Just accept Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior and you will be healthy, prosperous, popular, and happy."
> "Go to services each week."
> "Pray harder."

While these teachings may be fundamental teachings of religious faith, alone they are inadequate to deal with the complexity of most experiences of human suffering like family violence. When offered as simple and complete answers to life's questions, they create in the hearer an illusion of simplicity which leaves the hearer vulnerable to becoming overwhelmed by an experience of suffering. In addition, the teachings set up a dynamic which blames the victims for their suffering.

> "If you are a good Christian or a good Jew, God will treat you kindly, or take care of you, or make you prosper as a reward for your goodness."
> "If you suffer, it is a sign that you must not be a good Christian or a good Jew and God is displeased with you."

If one accepts this simple formula (which makes a theological assumption that God's love is conditional), then when one experiences any form of suffering, one feels punished or abandoned by God. The simple answer alone cannot hold up in the face of personal or familial suffering. When people attempt to utilize the simple answer and it is insufficient, they feel that their faith has failed them or that God has abandoned them. In fact, it may be the teachings or actions of their particular congregation or denomination which have been inadequate to their needs. Thus they may be feeling abandoned.

The religious teachings of the Jewish and Christian traditions are adequate to address the experiences of contemporary persons when the traditions acknowledge the complexity, the paradox, and sometimes the incomprehensible nature of those experiences. The most important resource which the church or synagogue can provide is to be available to support those who are suffering, to be a sign of God's presence, and to be willing to struggle with the questions which the experiences may raise. Offering sweet words of advice to "solve" life's problems reduces the experience of the one who suffers to a mere slogan and denies the depth of the pain and the potential for healing and new life.

Cooperative Roles for Secular Counselor and Minister/Rabbi

Both the secular counselor and the minister or rabbi have important roles to play in response to family violence. Families in which there is abuse need the support and expertise of both in times of crisis. Sometimes the efforts of the two will come into conflict, as illustrated by the following situation:

> We received a call at the Center from a local shelter for abused women. The shelter worker indicated that she had a badly beaten woman there whose minister had told her to go back home to her husband. The worker asked us to call the minister and "straighten him out." Ten minutes later we received a call from the minister. He said that the shelter had one of his parishioners there and the shelter worker had told her to get a divorce. He asked us to call the shelter and "straighten them out."

In the above case, both the shelter worker and the minister had the best interests of the victim in mind. Yet they were clearly at odds with each other because they did not understand the other's concerns which related to the needs of the victim. The shelter worker did not understand the minister's concern for maintaining the family and the minister did not understand that the woman's life was in danger. We arranged for the minister and the shelter worker to talk directly with each other, sharing their concerns in order to seek a solution in the best interest of the victim. This was accomplished successfully.

The need for cooperation and communication between counselors and ministers or rabbis is clear so that the needs of parishioners/congregants/clients are best served and the resources of both religious and secular helpers are utilized effectively.

Role of the Secular Counselor. In the secular setting, a social worker or mental

health provider may encounter a victim or abuser who raises religious questions or concerns. When this occurs, the following guidelines are helpful:

1. Pay attention to religious questions/comments/references.

2. Affirm these concerns as appropriate and check out their importance for the client.

3. Having identified and affirmed this area of concern, **if you are uncomfortable with it yourself or feel unqualified to pursue it**, refer to a pastor/priest/rabbi who is trained to help and whom you know and trust.

4. If you are comfortable and would like to pursue the concern, do so, emphasizing the ways in which the client's religious tradition can be a resource to her/him and can in no way be used to justify or allow abuse or violence to continue in the family. (See below.)

Role of Clergy. The minister/rabbi can most effectively help family abuse victims and offenders by co-operating with secular resources. Combined, these provide a balanced approach which deals with specific external, physical and emotional needs while addressing the larger religious and philosophical issues.

When approached about family violence, the minister/rabbi can use the following guidelines:

1. Be aware of the dynamics of family violence and utilize this understanding in evaluating the situation.

2. Use your expertise as a religious authority and spiritual leader to illuminate the positive value of religious traditions while clarifying that they do not justify or condone family abuse. (See below).

3. Identify the parishioner/congregant's immediate needs and REFER to a secular resource (if available) to deal with the specifics of abuse, intervention and treatment.

4. If you are comfortable pursuing the matter, provide additional pastoral support and encouragement to help families dealing with violence to take full advantage of available resources.

Scriptural and Theological Issues

Suffering. The experience of physical or psychological pain or deprivation can generally be referred to as "suffering." When a person experiences suffering, often the first question is, "Why am I suffering?" This is really two questions: "Why is there suffering?" and "Why me?" These are classical theological questions to which there are no totally satisfactory answers.

Sometimes a person will answer these questions in terms of very specific cause-and-effect relationships:

> "I am being abused by my husband as punishment from God for the fact that 20 years ago, when I was 17 years old, I had sexual relations with a guy I wasn't married to."

In this case, the victim of abuse sees her suffering as just punishment for an event which happened long ago and for which she has since felt guilty. This explanation has an almost superstitious quality. It reflects an effort on the part of the woman to make sense out of her experience of abuse by her husband. Her explanation takes the "effect" (the abuse), looks for a probable "cause" (her teenage "sin"), and directly connects the two. This conclusion is based on a set of theological assumptions which support her view: God is a stern judge who seeks retribution for her sins and God causes suffering to be inflicted on her as punishment.

Unfortunately, the woman's explanation neither focuses on the real nature of her suffering (i.e., the abuse by her husband), nor does it place responsibility for her suffering where it lies: on her abusive husband.

Sometimes, people try to explain suffering by saying that it is "God's will" or "part of God's plan for my life" or "God's way of teaching me a lesson." These explanations assume God to be stern, harsh, even cruel and arbitrary. This image of God runs counter to a Biblical image of a kind, merciful and loving God. The God of this Biblical teaching does not single out anyone to suffer for the sake of suffering, because suffering is not pleasing to God.

A distinction between voluntary and involuntary suffering is useful at this point. Someone may choose to suffer abuse or indignity in order to accomplish a greater good. For example, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. suffered greatly in order to change what he believed to be unjust, racist laws. Although the abuse he experienced was not justifiable, he chose voluntary suffering as a means to an end.

Involuntary suffering which occurs when a person is beaten, raped, or abused, especially in a family relationship also cannot be justified but is never chosen. It may, on occasion, be endured by a victim for a number of reasons, including a belief that such endurance will eventually "change" the person who is being abusive. However, this belief is unrealistic and generally only reinforces the abuse.

Christian tradition teaches that suffering happens to people because there is evil and sinfulness in the world. Unfortunately, when someone behaves in a hurtful way, someone else usually bears the brunt of that act and suffers as a result. Striving to live a righteous life does not guarantee that one will be

protected from the sinfulness of another. A person may find that she he suffers from having made a poor decision, (e.g. by marrying a spouse who is abusive). But this in no way means that the person either wants to suffer or deserves abuse from the spouse.

In Christian teaching, at no point does God promise that we will not suffer in this life. In scripture, God does promise to be present to us when we suffer. This is especially evident in the Psalms which give vivid testimony to people's experience of God's faithfulness in the midst of suffering (see Psalms 22 and 55).

One's fear of abandonment by God is often strong when experiencing suffering and abuse. This fear is usually experienced by victims of abuse who often feel they have been abandoned by almost everyone: friends, other family members, clergy, doctors, police, lawyers, counselors. Perhaps none of these believed the family members or were able to help. It is therefore very easy for victims to conclude that God has also abandoned them. For Christians, the promise to victims from God is that even though all others abandon them, God will be faithful. This is the message found in Romans:

> "For I am sure that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor things present, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord." (Romans 8:38-39, RSV).

Often this reassurance is very helpful to victims of violence or to those who abuse them.

Sometimes, people who regard suffering as God's will for them believe that God is teaching them a lesson and/or that hardship builds character. Experiences of suffering can, in fact, be occasions for growth. People who suffer may realize in retrospect that they learned a great deal from the experience and grew more mature as a result. This often is the case, but only if the person who is suffering also receives support and affirmation throughout the experience. With the support of family, friends, and helpers, people who are confronted with violence in their family can end the abuse, possibly leave the situation, make major changes in their lives, and grow as mature adults. They will probably learn some difficult lessons: increased self-reliance; how to express anger; that they may survive better outside than inside abusive relationships; that they can be a whole person without being married; that they can exercise control over their actions with others; that family relationships need not be abusive and violent.

However, this awareness of suffering as the occasion for growth must come from those who are suffering and at a time when they are well on their way to renewal. It is hardly appropriate when someone is feeling great pain to point out that things really are not so bad and that someday she/he will be glad that all of this happened. These words of "comfort and reassurance" are usually for the benefit of the minister/rabbi or counselor, not the parishioner/congregant or client. At a later time, it may be useful to point out the new growth which has taken place, and very simply to affirm the reality that this person has survived an extremely difficult situation. Suffering may present an occasion for growth, whether this potential is actualized depends on how the experience of suffering is managed.

Nature of the Marriage Relationship: A Jewish Perspective. The Jewish marriage ceremony is known as "Kiddushin" or sanctification. Through it a couple's relationship is sanctified or set apart before God. This sanctification reminds Jews to strive to express their holiness through marriage and the home in a covenantal relationship which is based on mutual love and respect.

Judaism views marriage as necessary for fulfillment. Marriage is part of God's plan. The first time God speaks to Adam, God says that it is not fitting that Adam should be alone. "Shalom Bayit," peace in the home, is a major family value in Judaism. "Shalom," which is simply translated as "peace," also signifies wholeness, completeness, fulfillment. Peace in the home, domestic harmony, encompasses the good and welfare of all the home's inhabitants.

The rabbis consider domestic tranquility as one of the most important ideals because it is the essential forerunner to peace on earth. "Peace will remain a distant vision until we do the work of peace ourselves. If peace is to be brought into the world we must bring it first to our families and communities."[2]

The concept of Shalom Bayit should not be misinterpreted as encouraging the preservation of an abusive marriage. When domestic harmony is impossible because of physical abuse, the only way for peace may be dissolution of marriage. Although marriage is viewed as permanent, divorce has always been an option according to the Jewish tradition.

In Judaism conjugal rights are obligatory upon the husband who must be available for his wife.

> "A wife may restrict her husband in his business journey to nearby places only, so that he would not otherwise deprive

---

Gates of Repentance: the New Union Prayer Book. Central Conference of American Rabbis, 1978, p. 6.

her of her conjugal rights. Hence he may not set out without her permission."[3]

While the husband is responsible for his wife's sexual fulfillment, the wife, in return, is expected to have sexual relations with her husband. Maimonides[4] teaches us about the relationship between husband and wife in a Jewish marriage. He asserts that if the wife refuses sexual relations with her husband . . .

> "she should be questioned as to the reason . . . If she says, 'I have come to loathe him, and I cannot willingly submit to his intercourse,' he must be compelled to divorce her immediately for she is not like a captive woman who must submit to a man that is hateful to her."[5]

This suggests that no wife is expected to submit to sexual activity with a husband she fears or hates. The arena of sexual sharing for Jewish couples is one of mutual responsibility and choice.

Nature of the Marriage Relationship: A Christian Perspective. Christian teaching about the model of the marriage relationship has traditionally focused heavily on Paul's letters to the Ephesians, Corinthians, and Colossians. Misinterpretations of or misplaced emphasis on these texts create substantial problems for many married couples. Most commonly, directives on marriage based on scripture are given to women and not to men, and state that wives must "submit" to their husbands. This often is interpreted to mean that the husband/father is the absolute head of the household and that the wife and children must obey him without question. Unfortunately, this idea has also been interpreted to mean that wives and children must submit to abuse from husbands and fathers. This rationalization is used by those who abuse, as well as by counselors, clergy, and the victims of the abuse themselves.

A closer look at the actual scriptural references reveals a different picture. For example, Ephesians 5: 21:

> "Be subject to one another out of reverence for Christ." (RSV, emphasis added)

This is the first and most important verse in the Ephesians passage on marriage and also the one most often overlooked. It clearly indicates that all Christians — husbands and wives — are to be mutually subject to one another. The word which is translated "be subject to" can more appropriately be translated "defer" or "accommodate" to.

> "Wives accommodate to your husbands, as to the Lord." (Ephesians 5:22)

This teaching implies sensitivity, flexibility and responsiveness to the husband. In no way can this verse be taken to mean that a wife must submit to abuse from her husband.

> "For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the Church, his body, and is himself its savior. As the church is subject to Christ, so let wives also be subject in everything to their husbands." (Ephesians 5:23-24, RSV)

The model suggested here of husband-wife relationship is based on the Christ-church relationship. It is clear from Jesus' teaching and ministry that his relationship to his followers was not one of dominance or authoritarianism, but rather one of servant-hood. For example, Jesus washed the feet of his disciples in an act of serving. He taught them that those who would be first must in fact be last. Therefore, a good husband will not dominate or control his wife but will serve and care for her, according to Ephesians.

> "Even so husbands should love their wives as their own bodies. He who loves his wife loves himself. For no man ever hates his own flesh, but nourishes it and cherishes it, as Christ does the Church, because we are members of his body." (Ephesians 5:28-29, RSV)

This instruction to husbands is very clear and concrete. A husband is to nourish and cherish his own body and that of his wife. Physical battering which occurs between spouses is probably the most blatant violation of this teaching and a clear reflection of the self-hatred in the one who is abusive.

It is interesting that the passages quoted above from Ephesians (5.21-29) which are commonly used as instruction for marriage are instruction primarily for husbands; nine of the verses are directed toward husband's responsibilities in marriage; only three of the verses refer to wives' responsibilities and one refers to both. Yet, contemporary interpretation often focuses only on the wives and often misuses those passages to justify the abuse of the wives by their husbands. While spouse abuse may be a common pattern in marriage, it certainly cannot be legitimated by scripture.

In terms of sexuality in marriage, again this passage from Ephesians (see also Colossians 3.18-21) has been used to establish a relationship in which the husband has conjugal

---

[3] Yad Ishut XIV-2 Yale Judaica Series p. 87

[4] Maimonides was a Jewish philosopher (1135-1204) whose 14 volume *Torah* became a standard work of Jewish law and a major source for all subsequent codification of Jewish law.

[5] Yad Ishut XIV 8 p. 89

rights and the wife has conjugal duties. In fact, other scriptural passages are explicit on this issue:

> "The husband should give to his wife her conjugal rights, and likewise the wife to the husband. For the wife does not rule over her own body, but the husband does; likewise, the husband does not rule over his own body, but the wife does." (I Corinthians 7.3-4, RSV)

The rights and expectations between husband and wife in regard to sexual matters are explicitly equal and parallel, and include the right to refuse sexual contact. The expectation of equality of conjugal rights and sexual access and the need for mutual consideration in sexual activity is clear. The suggestion that both wife and husband "rule over" the other's body and not their own refers to the need for joint, mutual decisions about sexual activity rather than arbitrary, independent decisions. A husband does not have the right to act out of his own sexual needs without agreement from the wife; likewise, the wife also. This particular passage directly challenges the incidents of sexual abuse (rape) in marriage frequently reported by physically abused wives.

The Marriage Covenant and Divorce. A strong belief in the permanency of the marriage vows may prevent an abused spouse from considering separation or divorce as options for dealing with family violence. For the Christian, the promise of faithfulness "for better or for worse . . . 'til death do us part" is commonly taken to mean "stay in the marriage no matter what," even though death of one or more family members is a real possibility in abusive families. Jews view marriage as permanent, but "til death do us part" is not part of the ceremony. The Jewish attitude embodies a very delicate balance. Marriage is taken very seriously. It is a primary religious obligation and should not be entered into or discarded flippantly. Nevertheless, since the days of Deuteronomy, Jewish tradition has recognized the unfortunate reality that some couples are hopelessly incompatible and divorce may be a necessary option.

For some Christians, their denomination's strong doctrinal position against divorce may inhibit them from exercising this means of dealing with family violence. For others, a position against divorce is a personal belief often supported by their family and church. In either case, there is a common assumption that any marriage is better than no marriage at all and, therefore, should be maintained at any cost. This assumption arises from a superficial view of marriage which is concerned only with appearances and not with substance. In other words, as long as marriage and family relationships maintain a facade of normalcy there is a refusal by church and community to look any closer for fear of seeing abuse or violence in the home.

The covenant of Christian marriage is a life-long, sacred commitment made between two persons and witnessed by other persons and by God. Jews also regard marriage as sacred and intend that it be permanent. A covenant between marriage partners has the following elements:

1. It is made in full knowledge of the relationship.
2. It involves a mutual giving of self to the other.
3. It is assumed to be lasting.
4. It values mutuality, respect, and equality between persons.

A marriage covenant can be violated by one or both partners. It is common thinking in both Jewish and Christian traditions that adultery violates the marriage covenant and results in brokenness in the relationship. Likewise, violence or abuse in a marriage violates the covenant and fractures a relationship. In both cases the trust which was assumed between partners is shattered. Neither partner should be expected to remain in an abusive situation. Often, one marriage partner feels a heavy obligation to remain in the relationship and do everything possible to make it work. This is most often true for women. A covenant relationship only works if both partners are able and willing to work on it. In both traditions, it is clear that God does not expect anyone to stay in a situation that is abusive (i.e. to become a doormat). In the Christian tradition, just as Jesus did not expect his disciples to remain in a village that did not respect and care for them (Luke 9.1-6), neither does he expect persons to remain in a family relationship where they are abused and violated. In Jewish literature, the expectation is also clear:

> "... if a man was found to be a wife-beater, he had to pay damages and provide her with separate maintenance. Failing that, the wife had valid grounds for compelling a divorce."[6]

If there is a genuine effort to change on the part of the one who is abusive, it is possible to renew the marriage covenant, including in it a clear commitment to non-violence in the relationship. With treatment for the family members, it may be possible to salvage the relationship. If the one who is being abusive is not willing or able to change

---

[6] Maurice Lamm, *Jew at Wit, in Love and Marriage*, p. 157.

in the relationship, then the question of divorce arises. At this point in the marriage, divorce is really a matter of public statement: "Shall we make public the fact that our relationship has been broken by abuse?" The other option, of course, is to continue to pretend that the marriage is intact. (A woman reported that she divorced only a month ago but that her marriage ended ten years ago when the abuse began.)

In violent homes, divorce is not breaking up families. Violence and abuse are breaking up families. Divorce is often the painful, public acknowledgement of an already accomplished fact. While divorce is never easy, it is, in the case of family violence, the lesser evil. In many cases divorce may be a necessary intervention to generate healing and new life from a devastating and deadly situation.

Parents and Children. "Honor your Father and your Mother" is one of the Ten Commandments taught to all Jewish and Christian children. Unfortunately, some parents misuse this teaching in order to demand unquestioning obedience from their children. In a hierarchical, authoritarian household, a father may misuse his parental authority to coerce a child into abusive sexual activity (incest). Parents may use this commandment to rationalize their physical abuse of a child in retaliation for a child's lack of obedience.

For Christians, the meaning of the third commandment is made very clear in Ephesians.

> "Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. 'Honor your father and mother' (this is the first commandment with a promise) 'that it may be well with you and that you may live long on the earth.' Fathers, do not provoke your children to anger, but bring them up in the discipline and instruction of the Lord." (Ephesians 6.1-4, RSV, emphasis added)

Children's obedience to their parents is to be "in the Lord," it is not to be blind and unquestioning. In addition to instructions to children, instructions are also given to parents to guide and instruct their children in Christian values, i.e. love, mercy, compassion, and justice. Any discipline of a child must be for the child's best interest. The caution to the father not to provoke the child to anger is most appropriate. If there is anything which will certainly provoke a child to anger, it is physical or sexual abuse by a parent.

Jewish tradition deals with the same concern, making a distinction between children based on maturity.

> "One is forbidden to beat his grownup son, the word 'grownup' in this regard, refers not to age but to his maturity. If there is reason to believe that the son will rebel and express that resentment by word or deed, even though he has not yet reached the age of Bar Mitzvah (13), it is forbidden to beat him. Instead he should reason with him. Anyone who beats his grownup children is to be excommunicated, because he transgresses the Divine Command (Lev. 19.14) 'Thou shalt not put a stumbling block before the blind.' (for they are apt to bring sin and punishment upon their children.)"

Even though Jewish law gives great authority to the father in relationship to the children, the requirement for restraint is clearly indicated. Again, the priority is on the welfare of the child.

The other scriptural injunction which is commonly used to justify abusive discipline of children is the Proverb: "Spare the rod and spoil the child." This proverb is commonly interpreted to mean that if a parent does not use corporal punishment on a child, the child will become a spoiled brat. This is a good example of a misinterpretation based on a contemporary understanding. In fact, the image referred to in this Proverb is probably that of shepherd and the rod is the shepherd's staff (see Psalm 23.4: "thy rod and thy staff shall comfort me"). A shepherd uses his staff to guide the sheep where they should go. The staff is not used as a cudgel.

With this image of the shepherd guiding the sheep in mind, it is certainly clear that children need guidance and discipline from parents and other caring adults to grow to maturity. Children do not need to be physically beaten to receive guidance or discipline. Beating children as discipline teaches them very early that it is all right to hit those you love for their own good. This kind of lesson fosters early training for persons who grow up and subsequently physically abuse their spouses and children.

Confession and Forgiveness. The need to admit wrongdoing experienced by an abusive family member is a healthy sign that he/she is no longer denying the problem but is ready and willing to face it. The offender may seek out a minister or rabbi for the purpose of confessing.

Sometimes, however, an abusive father confesses, asks forgiveness, and promises never to sexually approach his daughter again, or a mother swears never to hit her child in anger again. The minister/rabbi is then put in a position of assuring forgiveness and evaluating the strength of the person's promise not to

---

Kitzur Shulhan Aruch

abuse again. While the abuser may be genuinely contrite, he/she is seldom able to end the abuse without assistance and treatment.

The minister/rabbi needs to assure the person of God's forgiveness and must confront the person with the fact that he/she needs additional help in order to stop the abuse. For some people, a strong word from a minister/rabbi at this point is an effective deterrent. "The abuse must stop now." Sometimes this strong directive can provide an external framework for beginning to change the abusive behavior.

For the Jew the Hebrew term "teshuvah" is the word for repentance. "Teshuvah" literally means "return", clearly denoting a return to God after sin. In Judaism there is a distinction between sins against God and sins against people. For the former only regret or confession is necessary. For sins against people, "teshuvah" requires three steps: first, admission of wrongdoing; second, asking for forgiveness of the person wronged (here abused); third, reconciliation which can be accomplished only by a change in behavior.

The issue of forgiveness also arises for victims of abuse. A friend or family member may pressure the victim: "You should forgive him. He said he was sorry." Or it may arise internally: "I wish I could forgive him . . ." In either case, the victim feels guilty for not being able to forgive the abuser. In these cases, often forgiveness is interpreted to mean to forget or pretend the abuse never happened. Neither is possible. The abuse will never be forgotten — it becomes a part of the victim's history. Forgiveness is a matter of the victim's being able to say that she/he will no longer allow the experience to dominate her/his life — and will let go of it and move on. This is usually possible if there is some sense of justice in the situation, officially (through the legal system) or unofficially. Forgiveness by the victim is possible when there is repentance on the part of the abuser, and real repentance means a change in the abuser's behavior.

Another issue is timing. Too often the minister/rabbi or counselor's need for the victim to finish and resolve the abusive experience leads him/her to push a victim to forgive the abuser. Forgiveness in this case is seen as a means to hurry the victim's healing process along. Victims will move to forgive at their own pace and cannot be pushed by others' expectations of them. It may take years before they are ready to forgive, their timing needs to be respected. They will forgive when they are ready. Then the forgiveness becomes the final stage of letting go and enables them to move on with their lives.

Conclusion

This commentary addresses some of the common religious concerns raised by people dealing with family violence. It is an attempt to help the reader begin to see ways of converting potential roadblocks into valuable resources for those dealing with violence in their families.

Personal faith for a religious person can provide much needed strength and courage to face a very painful situation and make changes in it. Churches and synagogues can provide a much needed network of community support for victims, abusers, and their children.

It is clearly necessary for those involved in Jewish and Christian congregations and institutions to begin to address these concerns directly. In ignorance and oversight, we do much harm. In awareness and action, we can contribute a critical element to the efforts to respond to family violence in our communities.

THE ROLE AND WORK OF THE PARAPROFESSIONAL
BASIC RELATIONSHIP SKILLS/ATTITUDES

Purpose

This course is designed as a general introduction to basic counselling skills and understanding how to use oneself as an effective counsellor. The development of trainees into sensitive paraprofessionals is encouraged through discussion and understanding of their role, insight into their own feelings, behavior and attitudes, and skill practice sessions.

Rationale

Trainees have been selected for their life experience, warmth, sensitivity and ability to relate to people. This course will introduce them to ways in which they can use themselves in different capacities and the counselling skills needed to utilize this understanding. The goal will be the development of a professional friend = advocate = equal where the trainees' natural spontaneity and relationship skills will be employed. The "masked" professional self that many helpers develop through formal training is discouraged and is inappropriate for this work. Most of the skills and attitudes taught can be applied to counselling in general but they are particularly important in working with battered women.

This course is divided into 3 sections:

1. Para-Professional Roles, Relationship and Attitudes
2. Differential use of self
3. Communication-Skills: listening, writing, interviewing

Format

1. Trainees will read the chapter in Getting Free "Getting Help From a Counsellor" in order to understand the needs and perspective of the client.
2. Trainees will then read the chapter in Stopping Wife Abuse "Working with the Victim" for an understanding of the role and work of the professional helper. Trainees will read the material reprinted from Introduction to Family Advocacy chapter 2 "Communication" and chapter 3 "Interviewing" for information on specific skills needed in their work with battered women. These readings, the discussion of the content, and practice of communication and interview skills form the basis of the learning for this section.

THE ROLE OF THE PARAPROFESSIONAL

1. Relationships and Attitudes

After reading the assigned chapters trainees will use the following guidelines in discussing their role.

1. What the paraprofesional role is as:

   a)practical helper
   b)educator
   c)counsellor
   d)advocate and supporter

2. a) How does the concept of equality between helper and client fit into this role?

   b) How can one be a "professional friend"?

   c) How does the approach as an equal compare with the traditional understanding of the professional role?

   d) What are the advantages/disadvantages in the "equal" approach?

3. a) Examine the demands of the role:

   -the necessity for honesty
   -the need for giiving continuing support
   -confidentiality
   -empathy

4. What does it mean to be objective and non-judgemental? How is this attitude to be applied to working with battered women? How does the bias toward safety fit into this attitude? How does the bias towards the client's rights fit?

5. What degree of responsibility, flexibility, kindness and caring are appropriate?

6. What stresses and difficulties can the professional helper expect?
7. What constraints can trainees expect in their work?
8. Trainees will discuss the approach to their work. This approach is to identify and build on women's strenghts and possibilities, rather than weaknesses. It acknowledges the resiliance and strength of women who have been battered. The imperative of women's safety is always stressed, as well as the necessity of women's rights to ensure that women have the ability to make choices.

2. Differential Use of the Self

As a counsellor, trainees will use themselves in different ways. They will emphasize different aspects of their roles at different times. As well as learning to utilize different aspects of their personalities. Now that the trainees have done some self examination they will be prepared to explore the ways they can use themselves as a resource. Trainees are asked to explore the following questions in small discussion groups. Summaries of the discussions will be shared in the whole group.

1. How do you come across to others: soft, hard authoritative, understanding, abrupt etc?

2. Analyze your gestures; your body language; your facial expressions. Do you look hopeful, excited, anxious, depressed, concerned, worried, harassed?

3. How much do your moods fluctuate? Do you express this? Should you express this?

4. Do you show different personalities or aspects of yourself to different people?

5. Do you act as natural in your counselling sessions as you do in conversations with friends? Do you use humour, spontaneity, personal anecdotes?

6. How do you keep your spontaneity, and natural feelings and not develop a hard shell, become too methodical, too calculating, too tired or too overwhelmed?

7. How do you build confidence, self-control, and learn to be supportive?

It is important that each trainee appreciate what is unique and special about herself. Trainees should acknowledge what is special about themselves and each other.

The following sections are reprinted with permission from Introduction To Family Advocacy.

These sheets can be photocopied and distributed to trainees and adapted for use in teaching these skills.

SUMMARY

Interviewing is an art and a skill. Basically, good interviewing is good communication. It is a skill that can help you no matter what your line of work--

Test your knowledge of interviewing by answering the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of an interview?

2. What is the difference between an "interviewer" and an "interviewee"?

3. Why is it important for the interviewer to establish trust?

4. What is empathy?

5. What is the difference between an "open-ended" and a "closed" question?

6. What two things must an effective interviewer know?

7. Why is interviewing considered both an "art" and a "skill"?

appendices

COMMUNICATION

Human society is based on networks of relationships. The quality of our relationships--and the strength of our networks--depends to a large degree on our ability to communicate with other people--to give clear messages that say what we mean. Communication, therefore, is one of the most important parts of human behavior.

This chapter will look at interpersonal communication and provide guidelines to help you develop more effective communication skills.

If two persons come together, they will almost inevitably communicate *something* to each other. Even when they do not speak, they send messages through their posture, their facial expressions, their gestures--the vibrations they send off.

WHAT IS COMMUNICATION?

Communication is the process of sending messages from one person to another. It includes talking, listening, reading, writing, touching. It is the way people express their thoughts, desires, needs, fears, triumphs, pain, and joy.. Communication is both what we say and how we say it. It is also the subtle messages we convey without words. It is the foundation for all human relationships.

HOW DO WE COMMUNICATE?

Basically, we communicate in two ways:

- *Verbally: By using words in speaking [orally] or in writing.*

- *Nonverbally: Through actions, facial expressions, hand gestures, tone of voice, eye contact, etc.*

There's a common expression that "actions speak louder than words." In some cases it's true that a nonverbal message can be stronger than a spoken one. In other situations, verbal communication will make a stronger impression. We make choices all the time about whether to communicate something verbally or nonverbally. A great deal of the time, we use both methods together to reinforce one another.

THE COMMUNICATION PROCESS

All communication, whether verbal or nonverbal, consists of five elements:

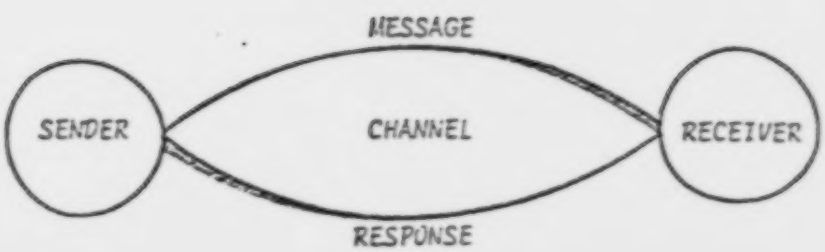
+ Sender: The person transmitting the message.

+ Receiver: The person toward whom the message is directed.

+ Message: The thoughts and feelings transmitted from the sender to the receiver.

+ Channel: The method used to transmit the message (voice, body language, the written word, etc.).

+ Response: The receiver's reaction to the message.



Most messages are intended to produce a particular response. For example:

Message	Response
A person says, "Good morning."	Another person replies, "Hello."
A father shakes his head.	The child stops reaching for the forbidden object.
The traffic light turns red.	The motorist stops.
A FAMILY ADVOCATE greets a client by name and introduces himself.	The client relaxes and says, "Hello, I'm glad to meet you."

When the message that is received is the same as the sender intended, the communication can be considered effective. Unfortunately, however, we do not always communicate what we intend. For example, when a FAMILY ADVOCATE tries to tell a teenage client about the medical dangers of using the Pill:

Message	Response
"The Pill is not always a safe form of birth control."	"You mean I can still get pregnant?"
"No, that's not what I mean. The Pill is effective but it can make you sick. I would stop using it if I were you."	"Oh, I should give up using birth control?"
"You should use something else--something that is both safe and effective."	"I see."

In the above example, the FAMILY ADVOCATE was not communicating effectively, until the end. The confusion began with the word "safe." The FAMILY ADVOCATE (the sender) used the word to mean "without the danger of illness." The client (the receiver) understood the word to mean "without the danger of getting pregnant." The problem lay in the language: the same word meant different things to different people.

The second breakdown in communication came as a result of the FAMILY ADVOCATE saying, "I would stop using it if I were you." Although the FAMILY ADVOCATE intended the message to mean that another form of birth control should be used in place of the Pill, this was not clearly expressed. Instead, the client only understood that she should no longer use the Pill. The communication was ineffective.

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION

Communicating effectively--getting your message across--is not always easy, but it is worth the time and effort. Communication has a strong bearing on how we judge ourselves and how we are seen by others. It affects our relationships with loved ones, and co-workers, and influences our other day-to-day encounters. Some guidelines to help you communicate more effectively are:

- *Have a clear understanding of what you intend to communicate.* If you are uncertain or confused about your intended message, it is unlikely that you will be understood. In other words, "think before you speak." Knowing what you want to communicate varies with your level of self-awareness. The more you know about yourself, your values and your goals, the clearer your communication will be.

  Choose your words carefully. Words that mean one thing to you might have a different meaning for another person. When one person uses the word "bad," it is positive and complimentary; for another person it has negative meanings.

- *Make certain that your nonverbal message matches your verbal communication.* When you tell a person that you are happy to see them but have a frown on your face, you are not likely to be believed. When your supervisor on the job gives you instructions and you look over her shoulder while at the same time saying, "okay," she will probably think that you are not paying attention.

- Be *sensitive to responses of the receiver.* Listen carefully to what is said. Watch for body language. Check to see that they are consistent.

- *If in doubt, ask.* Do not make assumptions about what the other person means. If you feel that you have not clearly understood the other person's meaning, ask for clarification. If you have doubts about whether the other person has understood you, find out if you have made yourself clear.

- *Restate your message.* If you feel you have not been understood, use different words to repeat your message. Try to find examples to illustrate what you mean.

Effective communication requires three basic skills:

- speaking
- listening
- observing

NONVERBAL COMMUNICATION: "SEEING IS BELIEVING"

Most of our communication is nonverbal. When we walk down the street, enter a room, smile at a stranger, or look fondly at a child, we are sending messages. Some of our strongest impressions are made through nonverbal communication: the way we dress, how fast or slowly we talk, the tone of our voice, our facial expressions, the way we walk, our posture. These nonverbal forms convey our emotions, our attitudes, our personality, how we feel about ourselves, and how we feel about others. Many of our reactions to others are based on nonverbal messages.

When we get on a subway or bus, we decide which passengers to sit next to and which ones to avoid. We quickly consult a mental checklist. (Young men in sneakers, slouched in their seats, looking untidy, playing loud transistor radios, and drinking out of a can in a paper bag, are to be avoided if possible. Neatly dressed older women always seem safe.)

The way your husband or wife looks and the tone of his or her voice at the end of the day tells you something about his or her mood. (The nonverbal signals a family member gives can indicate a pending argument, a need to talk, or the need to share an experience.)

t on shopping in a different store, we will often wait for a particular salesclerk even though there might be others available. (Based on facial expression, courtesy, appearance, we decide which clerk will be most helpful.)

These are all examples of personal judgments formed on the basis of nonverbal communication and the underlying belief that "what you see is what you get." Physical appearance, including our clothes and grooming, is one of the strongest forms of nonverbal communication. It is the first impression we make and tells how we feel about ourselves and the people around us.

Much of our nonverbal communication is automatic and unintentional. Our gestures, posture, and facial expressions convey our thoughts and feelings to everyone we encounter, and each person decides what we're letting him know. We can learn to control our nonverbal messages by becoming more sensitive to our behavior and the impact it has on others. If you know how you want other people to perceive you, you can adjust your nonverbal message until it matches what you want to communicate.

ORAL COMMUNICATION: TALKING AND LISTENING

It is the capacity to use words for expressing ideas and feelings that makes human beings different from other animals and gives them the power to control their environment.

When we think of "communication," most of us immediately consider talking and listening. When we say that someone communicates well, we usually mean that he or she can use words to get a point across clearly. How well we speak and how carefully we listen are basic to good communication skills.

- *If we speak clearly and distinctly and in a pleasant voice that sounds confident but not aggressive, people are likely to listen to what we have to say.*
- *If our words are thoughtfully chosen, people are more likely to take our message seriously.*
- *If our words match our tone of voice, people are more inclined to be persuaded by the message.*
- *If we listen carefully to other people and respond appropriately, we communicate an attitude of respect and interest.*

Words and the way we use them are very important. Equally important is our ability to listen. Many barriers to effective communication are caused by attitudes that prevent us from <u>really hearing</u> what the other person is saying.

- People are often so preoccupied with their own problems that they do not listen to the other person.
- At times they are so busy thinking about what they are going to say next that they do not pay attention to the other person's message.
- Sometimes people are so sure they know what the other person is going to say that they let their mind wander, stop listening, or interrupt.
- Some people are argumentative and listen defensively. That is, they are constantly thinking of ways to challenge or contradict the speaker. They are not interested in communicating (exchanging ideas and feelings, and understanding the other person) but merely in being disagreeable.
- Perhaps the most serious barrier to effective communication is lack of trust. Distrust causes people to hide their true feelings and thoughts and to look for hidden motives in the other person's words. Real communication is possible only where trust exists.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION: THE POWER OF THE PEN

Written communication is the part of an event that gets recorded. Often the perception of an event will vary from one recorder to another. What each person writes will be based on his or her own point of view--the way they see things. This will influence the opinion of anyone who reads the account.

The importance of written communication is reflected in the statement, "The pen is mightier than the sword."

As a FAMILY ADVOCATE, the records you keep on your job will affect the types of services your clients receive. Part of your goal, therefore, is to keep your records as objective and factual as possible.

COMMUNICATION CHECKLIST

How well do you communicate with others? Do you send messages that say what you mean? Do you listen carefully? Are you a good observer? Think about an important example of communication in the past few days, either on your job or with a family member, and answer the following questions.

	YES	NO
1. Did you think carefully about the message you intended to convey?	___	___
2. Did you choose your words carefully?	___	___
3. Did your nonverbal message match your verbal message?	___	___
4. Did you listen carefully to the communicator?	___	___
5. Were you aware of his or her body language?	___	___
6. Did his or her nonverbal message match the verbal message?	___	___
7. Did you check with the other person to make certain you were understood?	___	___
8. Did you attempt to clarify any difference between your intended message and the message received by the other person?	___	___
9. Did you ask the other person to clarify the message when you felt you didn't understand?	___	___
10. Did you feel free to express yourself honestly? If not, why not? (Think about how this affected your communication.)	___	___
11. Do you think the other person felt free to express him or herself honestly? If not, why?	___	___
12. Did silence or a pause communicate something to you?	___	___

SUMMARY

Communication is a circular process which works like a two-way radio: (a) the sender transmits a message to the receiver, (b) the receiver provides feedback, becoming a sender, and (c) the original sender responds to the feedback.

Communication is complex. Think of all the reasons why people might misunderstand each other. It's a small miracle that effective communication ever takes place. Despite the potential for difficulties, most of us usually manage to communicate our intended message. However, all of us can communicate better through practice and increased self-awareness--knowing what we want to convey and why.

How and what you communicate reveals a great deal about you and determines other people's responses to you.

INTERVIEWING

Interviewing is a form of communication. It is a skill that we use to obtain information about our environment and the people around us. It is a skill that all of us use everyday. Effective interviewing means being able to ask the right question, at the right time, in the right way.

This chapter will provide guidelines for conducting interviews in human service agencies. The principles that are discussed should be of value, however, in all kinds of interviews.

WHAT IS AN INTERVIEW?

An interview is a special form of communication to either obtain or exchange information. This means that everyone, at one time or another, engages in interviewing. Actually, we use interviewing skills everyday. Many of our conversations with others, which we take as a matter of course, are in fact interviews. Sometimes we are the "interviewer" (giving information), and sometimes we are the "interviewee" (receiving information):

- A father interviews his child's teacher to obtain information about the child's progress in school. *The teacher, in turn, interviews the father to find out about the child's study habits and after-school activities.*

- A rental agent interviews a possible tenant to obtain information about his eligibility and desirability. *The prospective tenant interviews the agent to get facts about the apartment--the rent, the size, the facilities, etc.*

- An employer interviews a job applicant to obtain information about her skills, experience, and personality for the job. *The applicant interviews the employer to learn more about the position--the salary, hours, specific responsibilities, fringe benefits, etc.*

TYPES OF INTERVIEWS

There are various types of interviews and they serve many purposes. Some are formal and structured; others are informal and unstructured. They range from simple data collection (the census taker) to therapeutic intervention (the psychiatrist). Most interviews fall somewhere between these two extremes:

Think of an interview you had recently in which you were the interviewee. What was the purpose? Who interviewed you? Did they get the information they were after?

Think of an interview in which you were the interviewer. What was the purpose? Whom did you interview? Did you find out what you wanted to learn?

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWING IN HUMAN SERVICE AGENCIES

Since interviewing is a form of communication, it follows the principles of verbal and nonverbal communication in the preceding chapter. However, there are some special circumstances that apply to interviews in human service agencies.

Human service interviews generally involve obtaining information for the purpose of helping the client. The human service interviewer must:

- *Obtain information about the client and the client's problem.*
- *Provide information that can help the client resolve the problem.*

Clients of human service agencies have problems to be solved. They are often anxious, depressed, or upset. As FAMILY ADVOCATES, you must be able to interact with people who are highly emotional and looking to you for help. You must also deal with your own feelings, which will sometimes include annoyance, frustration, and a sense of powerlessness. Here are some guidelines that can help you conduct interviews in your role as a FAMILY ADVOCATE:

1. Be Prepared for the Interview

Organizing yourself and your environment is the first step in putting the client at ease. To help prepare yourself for the interview, you should:

- Be aware of other agencies that might be able to help your client. If you don't memorize this information, you should know where and how you can get it.

- Be clear about the purpose of the interview. If the client has already been seen at your agency, read the case history (if possible) and discuss the case with your supervisor before the first interview. For later interviews, review the case record to make sure you are up to date regarding the client.

- Set aside sufficient time for the interview, and arrange your schedule to avoid unnecessary interruptions. When people come to you for help, they deserve your complete attention. If unexpected interruptions occur, keep them brief, and apologize to the client.

Try to conduct the interview in a setting that will be relaxing to the client, and can help establish trust. Is the space cluttered with papers and other clients' files? Will you and the client have enough privacy, given the physical layout of your agency and the space in which you must work?

In many agencies you will be pressured for time, and may have to conduct your interviews in places that are crowded with people or clutter. This is sometimes unavoidable. *It is important to understand, however, that these factors distract both you and the client.* You can tell the client that you realize the noise makes it difficult to concentrate.

Given the situation in which you are working, try to organize your time and surroundings so that you and the client can focus on the interview. Do not rush clients unnecessarily. When possible, use an empty office or another quiet place.

Being well prepared will help you perform your job better. It will help relax you so that you can give your full attention to your client. It is an indication of respect for the client. *And showing respect is the beginning of establishing trust.*

2. *Examine Your Feelings and Attitudes*

An effective interviewer must first check out his or her own attitudes:

. How do you feel about the client as a person? (Is there something about his appearance or personality that turns you off and causes you to respond negatively?)

. How do you feel about the client's problem? Do you have strong views about alcoholics, about women who remain with men who abuse them, about men who batter their wives or girlfriends? How do you feel about abortion, unwed teenage mothers?)

. Can you relate to your clients even though you might not approve of their behavior?

. Do you feel capable of providing information and support that will help the client resolve his or her problem?

3. *Be Objective and Nonjudgmental*

Objective means "being without bias or prejudice." Nonjudgmental means "not being critical or sitting in judgment." Both of these are important attributes for FAMILY ADVOCATES.

This does not mean that you must like every client or approve of the client's behavior. It merely means (a) that you should be aware of how you feel, (b) that you should try to undertand the client's problem from her point of view, and (c) that you should try to relate to the client and her problem without allowing your own attitudes to interfere with your capacity to provide help.

4. *Establish Trust*

Mutual trust is the basis for all effective communication. In the human services, it is the responsibility of the worker to establish trust.

The client will trust you when she feels that you respect her, that you genuinely want to help, and that you have the information and skills to assist her.

Often when a client is distrustful, it is not a reaction to you personally but is a result of his

or her prior experiences. Some clients find it difficult to trust anyone. Others have had negative experiences that make them suspicious of human service agencies and human service workers.

Whatever the basis for the distrust, you can help the client feel comfortable and realize that you are concerned:

a. Greet the client by name. Introduce yourself by stating your name and job function. Unless the client is much younger than you, maintain an equal first name or last name relationship.

b. Begin the interview with a general, open-ended question such as, "What brings you to our agency?" (However, in some instances this type of question may be inappropriate. For example, if you are working with a food stamp program, this beginning might not be necessary, as the client's reason is already understood. You can make sure the person is in the right office by saying, "You're here to apply for food stamps?")

c. If this is the client's first contact with the agency, explain agency procedures, the purpose of the interview, the range of services your agency provides, and what you can do to help. Make it clear which services relate most directly to the client's need.

d. Speak slowly and calmly. Give the client your full attention.

e. Pay close attention to the client's nonverbal messages. What impression do you get from her posture, facial expressions, or the way she's listening to you?

f. Do not rush the client to answer. Give the client enough time to consider her response.

g. Let the client know that you recognize and accept her feelings and that you realize the complexity of the problems. At various points during the interview. summarize your understanding of the situation and ask the client if she has other concerns or anything she would like to add. It's important for the client to feel that your view of the problem is accurate and complete.

h. When in doubt, ask the client to explain or to give more detail.

i. If the client becomes overwhelmed by emotion and begins to cry, offer tissues, water, etc., and allow the client time to collect her feelings. Don't act uncomfortable at the client's tears.

j. If the client becomes agitated, reassure her that you will do everything you can to help.

5. *Develop a Relationship*

Establishing trust is not a one-shot situation, but a process that develops throughout your contacts with a client. The steps outlined above are merely the beginning. To build a good client-worker relationship and ensure the growth of trust, there are other worker characteristics that are necessary.

. Sensitivity. Sensitivity means being aware of how other people feel and being concerned about their emotions. It also means showing the person that you are taking their feelings into consideration. No one can teach you how to become a more sensitive person. But with a little effort, you can teach yourself. The most important thing is to genuinely care about other people and want to help. Some steps you can take to become more sensitive are:

Become more aware of your own feelings and how they affect your behavior. As you learn to understand yourself better, you will become more sensitive to other people's emotional needs.

Listen carefully to what people say and try to understand the feeling behind the message.

Pay careful attention to nonverbal communication. Does the client's tone of voice indicate that she is depressed? Does her facial expression show that she is confused? Does she get fidgety or nervous when you talk about certain things?

Empathy. Being empathetic means putting yourself in the other person's shoes. How would you feel if you were old and alone? What must it feel like to be 16 years old with a two-year old child? What would it feel like to have been assaulted by a mugger? What would it feel like to be assaulted by your husband?

Empathy can have its dangers, however. Listening to a client's problem can often remind you of your own. Try not to become so empathetic that you are overwhelmed with emotion and unable to be of help.

Honesty. Do not give false reassurance. The most you can do is assure the client that you will do everything in your power to help. Rarely can you guarantee that the problem will be resolved to the client's satisfaction. However, you can explain that by cooperating, you and the client can accomplish a great deal.

Support. Many of your clients will feel that they are powerless--that there is nothing they can do to change their situation. Support means providing encouragement and helping clients recognize that with planning, effort, and perseverance they can take some control over their lives. Support means showing clients problem-solving skills and letting them explore some options. It also means helping clients recognize that they have resources they may not have considered. Many clients use so much energy worrying about their problem that they are unable to think of possible solutions or ways that they might change their situation. Finally, support means letting the client know that you are willing to provide all the assistance you can.

"Interviewing is the modest, immediate science of gaining trust then gaining information. Both ends must be balanced if the interview is to be balanced and insightful."

John Brady
The Craft of Interviewing

6. *Obtain Information*

As a FAMILY ADVOCATE, much of your time will be spent obtaining information from clients. This information might be needed for a variety of reasons, including (a) to determine an applicant's eligibility for services, (b) to make a referral to someone in your agency or to another agency, or (c) to decide what specific help or service a client needs.

The three skills you'll need for obtaining information are: asking questions, focusing the interview, and interpreting clues.

Asking Questions

It has been said that if you "ask a dumb question, you'll get a dumb answer."

The skill of questioning may be the key to good interviewing. Questioning can be considered an art as well as a skill, since a good interview depends not only on the questions but on the spirit in which they are asked. This makes your manner and tone of voice, as well as your asking the right question at the right time, as important as the words you use. If you are genuinely concerned and want to help, your client will detect this and respond accordingly. Here are some pointers about questioning:

Basically, there are two types of questions: open-ended and closed. Open-ended questions invite the client to talk freely and to express feelings and ideas. Open-ended questions also help you learn more about the client and give you time to think of specific questions you might ask. They are particularly useful with clients who are depressed, because they encourage the client to be more responsive. (However, if the client is extremely depressed, you might have to ask a series of closed questions first in order to establish rapport and trust.)

Examples of Open Questions:

"Why did you quit high school?"

"How does your husband behave when he gets angry with you or the children?"

"What have you been doing for the last ten years?"

Closed questions are very specific and require either a "yes" or "no" or another one-word answer. They are used to obtain specific information. They can help clients who are agitated or excited to calm down and become more focused.

Examples of Closed Questions:

- *How old are you?*
- *How many children do you have?*
- *Have you ever been in jail?*
- *Has your husband ever hit you?*

Basically, human service questions serve three general purposes:

a. Data Collecting

Data collecting is done through closed questions that are usually part of a questionnaire designed to get a personal history of the client. They include information related to age, marital status, number of children, place of birth, income, address, length of time at present address, education, schools children attend, etc. Even when your questions have been prepared by the agency in a questionnaire, you should know the reason behind each question. If a client is reluctant to answer a question, for example, you might have to explain its purpose. Both you and the client should understand the reason for each question and why it is important.

b. Descriptions

Descriptive questions are generally open-ended, and they will allow you to learn the client's view of a particular situation or problem. Descriptive questions will help you understand not only the situation but the client, so that you can assess the case.

Examples of Descriptive Questions:

"What happened just before your daughter left the house?"

"What usually causes your husband to hit you? Give me a few examples."

"What does your father do when you come home late?"

c. Feelings

Questions related to feelings help you determine the client's personality characteristics and ability to see the reality of a situation.

Examples of Feelings Questions:

To an abusive parent: "Mrs. Brown, what were you feeling and what were you thinking when you began hitting your daughter?" OR "Tell me what went through your mind when you began to hit your daughter."

To a teenage runaway: "What do you think is the cause of the problems between you and your parents?"

Focusing the Interview

An effective interviewer must know the answers to two questions: What is the purpose of the interview? What information is needed in order to help the client? Your responsibility is to guide the client in order to make certain that you get this information. To focus the interview, tell the client--at the beginning of the session--the purpose of the interview and of the questions you will be asking.

While it is important to let the client express himself freely, you, as the interviewer, are responsibile for keeping the interview on the right track. As the interviewer, you'll have to make a series of decisions:

- What is the purpose of this interview?
- What information do I need in order to help this client?
- What questions must I ask in order to get this information?
- When should I let the client ramble a bit, since this can help him feel comfortable and perhaps help establish trust?
- Should I interrupt the client, or try to focus the interview, if the client is talking too long about topics that don't seem important?

Interpreting Clues

Many clients do not describe themselves or their problems clearly. The information they give you will often be vague and confused. This happens for a number of reasons, such as:

- They lack good communication skills.
- They have not clearly defined the problem.
- They lack personal insight.
- They have not grown to trust you yet.
- They don't want you to know what they're really like.

Whatever the reason, one of your tasks as an interviewer is learning to interpret clues. This requires being sensitive to both verbal and nonverbal messages:

- Does the client appear anxious? depressed? agitated? angry?

- What do his opening remarks really mean? How does he describe his problem?

- Is she avoiding giving you certain details?

- Does he continually change the subject when particular questions are asked?

- Does he give conflicting or inconsistent answers:

- Is she testing you?

Effective interviewing requires you to observe carefully and listen attentively. It calls for you to read between the lines, listen for feeling tone, and watch body language in order to understand what the client is--or is not--saying.

However, while it is necessary that you learn to interpret clues, it is equally important that you not make assumptions or take anything for granted. When the client is not providing a clear picture, check your impressions with statements that begin:

"I am a bit confused and would like to check something out."

"From what you have said, it seems that..."

"Am I right in thinking that...?"

Questions like these let your client know that the information is incomplete or conflicting and will give her an opportunity to provide clarification.

7. *Provide Information*

"There is a real art in giving information. ...A perfunctory response will keep the inquirer from asking other questions or even from repeating his original question in case he has not understood the answer. A bored expression is obvious....A cordial manner is desirable....Written directions, if they are at all complicated, are preferable to those given only verbally. It is always preferable to have the person repeat directions if there is not time to write them out."

Annette Garrett Interviewing: Its Principles and Methods

After you obtain the necessary information from the client, your next step is to provide information to help solve the problem. Here are some guidelines:

- When possible, involve the client in the decision-making process. Explain all the options. The extent of the client's involvement will depend on the nature of the problem, the type of solution, and the client's ability to make decisions.

- Be very specific and make certain that the client understands exactly what is to occur: What is the client to do? When and where is he to do it? What are you to do? When and where? Individuals who have serious problems often have difficulty concentrating or absorbing information. If necessary, write the information down or have the client write it down.

- When possible (and where necessary) suggest alternative plans in case the first plan does not work.

- Close the interview by asking the client if he has any questions. Encourage him to tell you when he's going to do all the things you've both agreed to.

INTERVIEWS CONDUCTED BY FAMILY ADVOCATES

This chapter has described some basic principles of interviewing, especially in the human services. The next section, will focus on some of the specific types of interviews conducted by FAMILY ADVOCATES, although these can very from agency to agency.

1. *Intake Interviews*

The intake interview determines what type of services the individual needs.

The interviewer's primary function is to obtain data about the client and his problem. This is usually done through closed questions designed to obtain specific facts.

The intake interview is especially important for two reasons: first, it is usually the client's initial contact with the agency. Therefore, it is at this point that the client begins to form an opinion about whether the agency can be trusted and whether it can help. Second, information obtained during intake

provides the basis for future decisions regarding services the client needs. Incomplete or incorrect information will make the client's and the agency's tasks doubly difficult. It's important for the interviewer to obtain and record accurate, thorough data.

2. *Crisis Intervention Interviews*

The crisis intervention interview helps you: (a) obtain a clear picture of the client and the crisis situation, (b) plan immediate action, and (c) consider what future interventions may be necessary.

The key word is immediate. Unless something is done immediately to help a client in crisis, he or she will probably be discouraged and won't return.

Because the client is usually in a highly emotional state, the interviewer must be active in focusing the interview and providing information and support.

(Crisis intervention is discussed in detail in Chapter 6.)

3. *Unplanned, Informal Interviews*

Any contact with a client is a potential interview. In seemingly casual conversations, clients often reveal information that can be useful in helping the client resolve her problem. In the natural flow of conversation, clients are more likely to speak freely and to say things they might not reveal in a more structured situation.

The extent to which clients will speak freely with you is determined by the quality of your relationship and the amount of trust they have in you. While you can often help the client by sharing useful information with your supervisor, it is equally vital that you not violate the client's trust in you. Therefore, if a client tells you something in confidence, you must respect the responsibility you have been given to keep this information private.

Appendix 1.

Assaulted Women (S.O.A.W.)
451 BLOOR ST West
TEL 922-7[illegible]

NAME OF SHELTER OR ORGANIZATION .....

1. DO YOU THINK THERE IS A NEED FOR MORE COUNSELLING FOR BATTERED WOMEN? PLEASE COMMENT:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

2. DO YOU THINK THAT LAY WOMEN CAN BE TRAINED TO PROVIDE COUNSELLING AND SUPPORT FOR BATTERED WOMEN?

.....

.....

.....

DO YOU THINK THAT FORMERLY BATTERED WOMEN WHO HAVE BEEN THROUGH AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM OF COUNSELLING CAN BECOME COUNSELLORS FOR BATTERED WOMEN?

.....

.....

.....

3. WOULD THIS TYPE OF PROGRAM BE USEFUL IN YOUR GEOGRAPHIC REGION?

yes ( ) no ( ) PLEASE EXPLAIN:

.....

.....

.....

.....

4. WHAT SPECIAL NEEDS WOULD SUCH A PROGRAM HAVE TO MEET TO BE USEFUL IN YOUR AREA?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

(please turn to other side of paper)

5. ARE THERE ANY GROUPS WORKING IN THE FIELD THAT YOU THINK WE SHOULD CONTACT?

.....

.....

.....

.....

6. ARE THERE STUDIES, ARTICLES, RESEARCH, WHICH YOU THINK WOULD BE PARTICULARLY USEFUL FOR US? yes ( ) no ( ) IF YES, PLEASE LIST:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

7. ARE THERE TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR THOSE WORKING WITH BATTERED WOMEN THAT YOU CAN RECOMMEND? yes ( ) no ( ) IF YES, PLEASE LIST:

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

8. WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN RECEIVING A DRAFT COPY OF THE PROGRAM? yes ( ) no ( )

9. ADDITIONAL COMMENTS .....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

signature

Please forward this form to: Doreen Lichtenstein and Barbara Waisberg
SUPPORT SERVICES FOR ASSAULTED WOMEN
427 Bloor St. West, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1X7

Appendix 3.

Support Services for Assaulted Women

please use back of sheet if necessary

Name _____

The following questions have been designed to cover a variety of programs and all questions may not apply to each program.

PART I - YOUR PROGRAM

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

1. Name of program

2. Location of program

3. Goals of program

4. Statement of philosophy

5. Key elements of program

6. How do you define success in your program

7. What particular aspects of the program contribute to that success?

8. What is the treatment model you use

9. Do you use peer support either individually or in a group.

   If you have a specific group program - please describe.

EDUCATION/TRAINING

10. What type of training/education background do you require of your workers?

11. Do you train your workers 'on the job' - if so, what do you do?

12. Is there any other training workers receive?

13. Do you use any special training materials? If so - what are they.

SERVICES

14. Are you able to do any follow-up in your program.

15. Are you able to do any evaluation in your program

16. How long is your program

17. Is there an average length of time clients spend in your service/program?

18. Is there a community action component to your program - if so, do the clients also participate?

19. If you provide direct service, are you able to provide a 24 hour crisis service? If so, what is it?

20. Are you able to provide special services for children? If so - what?

21. Do you provide services for batterers?

22. Are there criteria for those you can serve?

23. Where do you get your referrals?

24. Do you refer to other services? If so - where. (include traditional/alternate services)

25. How many clients do you serve

26. How do the women in your program get protection?

27. Are you able to accompany women to medical/legal/court appointments?

28. What other types of service would you like to provide if funds and personnel were available?

STRUCTURE

29. What kind of organizational structure do you have?
(include - decision making; supervision/accountability
community involvement; client involvement).

30. What are the program's connections with .....
Police
Courts
Hospitals
Welfare
Lawyers/Legal Aid
Doctors/Public Health Nurses
Social Agencies
Schools
Alternate Women's Services

31. What are your funding sources?

RESEARCH

32. Do you have information on type of
clientele served:
Age
Economic status
Educational background
Employment
Ethnicity
Religion

33. What types of records do you keep?

34. Do you routinely enquire about sexual assault and incest .....client .....children

35. Do you routinely enquire about assault to the children?

36. Do you routinely enquire about alcohol and drug use .....client .....children

37. Is there a specific research component to your program?

38. Is there any aspect of your program which you consider important that has not been mentioned?

please use the back of sheet
if necessary.

Name _____

PART II - OUR PROGRAM

From your perspective .....

1. What constitutes success in counselling/working with a battered women?

2. What training do you know of that has been effective?

3. What would you like to see included in training workers to counsel battered women (please be as specific as possible)

4. What qualities make one a good counselor of battered women?

5. What do you think of training lay women to counsel battered women?

6. What do you think of training formerly battered women to counsel battered women?

7. What groups/institution/agency should counsel battered women?

8. What group/school/institution/agency should train counsellors of battered women?

9. Have you in your work direct experience in counselling battered women?

Appendix 4

Personal interviews with

1. Deborah Sinclair, Counsellor, Family Services Association, Toronto.

2. Monica Ruitort, Counsellor, Centre for Spanish-Speaking People, Toronto.

3. Lorraine Greaves, Chair, Board of Directors, London Battered Women's Advocacy Clinic, London.

4. Peter Jaffe, Ph.D., London Co-ordinating Committee/London Family Court Clinic, London.

5. Barbara Harris, Director, Transition Centre, YM-YWHA, Far Rockaway, New York.

6. Katherine Conroy, Director of Youth and Family Services for the Sisters of the Good Shepherd Residence, New York.

Appendix 5

SUMMARY OF QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

1. "Do you think there is a need for more counselling for battered women?"

Responses were almost unanimous in their indication of the need for more counselling and support for battered women. A number expressed concern that counsellors be sympathetic, understand the problem, and be woman-centred.

"Yes -- there is a real need for more counsellors who are (a) feminist, (b) trained to work in this area, and (c) non-judgemental."

2 (a). "Do you think that lay women can be trained to provide counselling and support for battered women?"

Again there was consistent agreement that lay women could be trained. There was also indication that many programs were using lay women successfully.

"Certainly. Exaggerated professionalism is inappropriate. As well, training in the traditional helping professions with respect to family violence is, at this time, inadequate."

2 (b). "Do you think that formerly battered women who have been through an effective program of counselling can become counsellors for battered women?"

Most agreed that formerly battered women could become counsellors provided that they had had enough time to distance themselves and work out their experiences. Many indicated that at least a year after leaving and resettling would be necessary.

"Yes -- but I'm obviously prejudiced, since I was battered and think I can work effectively with other women in the same position. It's hard to be free of the nightmares, but I know for me, other women's understanding and support, from their personal experience, have been significant."

3. "Would this type of program be useful in your geographic region?"

Respondents indicated that there was a need for training and expanding services, and this program might be one way of meeting that need. There was also some concern expressed about the applicability of the program, given different regional resources and regulations.

"We cover an area of roughly 30,000 square miles as there is no other transition house in the south-west part of Saskatchewan. It would be helpful to have some other services available."

4. "What special needs would such a program have to meet to be useful in your area?"

The responses listed many needs. Some referred to the need to help women become more independent by providing concrete services such as child care, transportation, advocacy and information. Others referred to the need to help women build their self-esteem and confidence through assertiveness training, relaxation techniques for coping with stress, parenting skills, and redefining women's role. Some referred to the need to deal with related problems such as incest, alcoholism and drug abuse. A number mentioned the special needs of rural women, immigrant women, and native women.

"Basic feminist thrust. Be done in modules which can be modified to suit the situation."

"Geared to Native women; geared to rural life and lifestyles; geared to systems rather than a reliance on professional social services."

"It would need to deal with some of the following: (1) myths and stereotypes; (2) socialization; (3) cyclic patterns of abuse; (4) alcohol/drug abuse; (5) Native and other cross-cultural education; (6) survival in rural communities; (7) dealing with stress and anger; (8) preparing children for separation/ divorce; (9) assertiveness training; (10) parenting skills."

The answers to questions 5 through 9 varied depending on the region and resources, and the responses do not lend themselves to summary.